

Dhaka Day by Day

'I'll only shoot ducks sporting red ties.'

by Fayza Huq

The imposing man in "kurta-payjama", with his grey-blue eyes and brown hair, could easily have been a Grand Duke or a Prince of Tartary. It is Vitaly Smirnov, as he served us home-made cream cakes decorated in the Pavlova style, and showed us around his residence with its carpets, chandeliers, cut glass vases, oil paintings and miniature plants was gracious and full of humorous anecdotes. The great grey stolid walls of Soviet Russia could only have been a far away passing thought for me surrounded by this comfort and bonhomie.

"There were three possibilities for the Soviet Ambassador to be ousted from Bangladesh," Mr. Smirnov recounts, with a twinkle in his eye. "The first case was to be recalled by my own government. The second instance was to be expelled and the third mischance was to be eaten by a Royal Bengal tiger."

"There were difficulties in our relations with the joint venture of the Rupsha bridge. In the following months I was informed that Bangladesh was not interested in building the bridge with Soviet aid. I began packing my bags. However, I was not recalled. That was a great face-saver," the Ambassador said gently, patiently and with concern.

"There was a situation in which I could have been expelled. I was invited to speak at a meeting by the Society for Human Rights. I spoke on Perestroika. After this meeting I was called up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and reprimanded because I had inadvertently participated in an event where the government of Bangladesh and its President had been criticised. The other speeches were in Bangla and I was naturally unaware of their contents. Here was a chance for the country to expel an ambassador for his faux pas," he said with a smile.

"There was yet another incident that embarrassed me," he continued about his stay in Bangladesh. I am a professional hunter and I want to shoot Siberian ducks. But I was told that was not possible. I assured that I would shoot only the Soviet ducks. The authorities then asked perplexed as to how one can differentiate between local ducks and the Soviet breed. I answered without hesitation that all Siberian ducks sport red ties. "Frankly speaking," he added with genuine amusement, "I enjoyed hunting in Bangladesh."

"I could have easily have been eaten by a Royal Bengal tiger. It was always been my dream to shoot such a tiger and I read about one in the newspapers. But I was refused permission from the Ministry of Forestry. So this dream of killing the rampaging tiger goes unfulfilled," he continued.

"Did he find similarities in the democratisation and liberalisation in Bangladesh and the Soviet Union? "People like democracy and development. These two words are close. The changes that are going on in the Soviet Union, Perestroika, this is the necessity of the time and it touches other people. It began in the Soviet Union and has an effect on East European countries. At the same time, there were democratic changes in your country. While the

USSR does not interfere in the internal affairs of any country we sympathise with democratic changes anywhere," Mr. Smirnov replied confidently.

Will USSR's status as world power be in the decline as there are internal problems in his country? To this the veteran diplomat admitted without hesitation. "The situation of economy is difficult in the USSR, I must confess. You need money, means of transport even to change the furniture in your flat. There is the problem of selling the old furniture too. To change everything in such a country as huge as ours is not easy. This year will be difficult for us but we shall survive. Our natural and human resources are vast."

Dwelling on the trade prospects between Soviet Union and Bangladesh Mr. Smirnov insisted that they were better than before.

"In the power sector the Ghorasal electric power station that we helped construct is one of the biggest electrical stations in South Asia. We are ready to cooperate in another such station. I suggested the construction of a nuclear power station in Bangladesh. You can produce ample cement from the Jaipurhat project. You have the possibilities to extract coal. The USSR has the technology of how to use this forelectropower stations, he informed me."

"We are the biggest buyers of your jute and tea. We even buy your toothpaste, cigarettes and readymade garments. We have entered into joint venture for shrimps in Chittagong. We have been sending lorries and cars to Bangladesh, he added with enthusiasm.

Touching on cultural relations he spoke of his great admiration for poetess Sufia Kamal and also, of course, for Tagore, whom he has been trying to get published in Bangla in the USSR. He reminded of the regular exchanges during the Tashkent Film Festivals, and informed of the Bangladesh-USSR Friendship Societies in places like Moscow and Central Russia. The Ambassador himself has visited many mosques and participated in the "jiteema" in Tongi. He permitted a Bangladesh delegation to participate in the 1001 year of introduction of Islam in Russia and spoke of how he had granted visas for "ulema" in Kakraal to visit USSR for Ramadan. The reason we do not see ballet performances or witness piano concerts from USSR is due to financial constraint. He regretted that the Government used so little of the scholarship facilities offered to students for higher education.

As for his wearing of "kurta" he reminds me that it is worn in the USSR too. He finds it most comfortable in the heat. A lover of litchis, mangoes and papayas, he found no time to learn Bangla. He said that Bengali eyes are so expressive that there was no need for language.

Mr. Smirnov has a Ph. D in history. He has travelled to about 50 different cities in his career. He has a son and a daughter, one a lawyer and the other a computer engineer. He expects to return to Minsk, Byelorussia, shortly.



Vitaly Smirnov discussing the three occasions on which he might have had to pack his bags — Star photo



HE IS BEATING THE HEAT: At a time when the Dhakaites are smarting under a severe hot spell, a day labourer finds comfort inside a thick concrete pipe. And he is having a nap quite happily. But then, such pipes are quite rare in the city for others like him to follow. — Star photo

Weather Heat wave to continue

By Staff Correspondent

Weather forecast valid till 6 pm of Sunday says weather is likely to remain dry and hot over the country except Chittagong Division where rain or thundershower with gusty wind may occur at one or two places. Day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree celsius over the country. Moderate heat wave may continue.

Weather remained dry over the country on Saturday. Day temperature remained nearly unchanged except in Faridpur, Comilla, Rangpur, Bogra where it rose by two degree celsius. The highest temperature of 39 degree celsius was reported from Rajshahi.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Rainfall likely to increase. Extended outlook for another five days: Little change.

The temperature and humidity of some cities on Saturday:

City	Temperature in celsius		Humidity	
	max	min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	37.8	25.5	56	28
Chittagong	34.4	27	79	72
Rangpur	36	16.2	48	34
Sylhet	34.3	21.6	56	40
Comilla	34.5	24.8	86	74
Rajshahi	39	17.2	42	X
Khulna	36.5	26	79	61
Dinajpur	37	17.4	43	26

Temperature of some international cities on Saturday:

Singapore	30
Beijing	22
Colombo	33
Bangkok	35

Biman fare for Haj reduced by Tk 8,147

The Government has reduced the Biman fare of balottee Haj pilgrims this year at Taka 40,000 to attract more people, according to an official hand-out, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a meeting, held recently. Previously the total cost for balottee Haj pilgrims was fixed at Taka 84,147, including Taka 48,147 as Biman fare.

Banks, which have already taken Biman fare at earlier rate, would adjust it with the reduced fare and refund the balanced amount to the Haj pilgrims at an appropriate time and place, the handout added.

The meeting was attended among others by the Religious Affairs Secretary AZM Shamsul Alam, Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Mohammad Ali and Managing Director of Bangladesh Biman Mofazzal Karim.

Crime on rise in Dhanmondi area

Criminal activities, including mugging, are on the increase in Dhanmondi residential area, which was declared a crime free zone by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, reports UNB.

Some 20 petty but daring crimes were committed in the area over the Eid holidays.

Most of the cases were not reported to the police for what the victims described as "obvious reasons". A pedestrian was robbed of his cash and a wrist watch in broad daylight on Road No. 8 on Tuesday.

On Thursday, two thugs, both in their teens, snatched a gold chain from the neck of Dr. Naseem Akhtar Begum from near her house in West Dhanmondi at about 9 pm.

Residents complained that the criminals were becoming more daring day by day and



Time	Program
5.00	Opening, recitation from the Holy Quran.
5.20	News in Bengali
5.30	Jhilimili: Children's programme
5.55	Cartoon film: Abbot and Costello
6.20	Sports programme.
7.50	Rabindra sangee.
8.00	News in Bengali.
8.30	Probaho: Documentary film.
9.00	English film: Ostin
10.00	News in English.
10.25	Parliamentary round up
10.40	Rag Rang: Classical music
11.30	News
11.45	Closing down

Menon tells Ctg press conference 'A Presidential poll to plunge country into uncertainty'

CHITTAGONG, Apr 20: Five-Party leader and Bangladesh Workers' Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon, MP today called upon the Prime Minister and Sangsad Leader Begum Khaleda Zia to arrive at a conclusion on the form of government through discussions with concerned parties, reports BSS.

Tk 5,000 for each injured railway passenger

CHITTAGONG, Apr 20: Bangladesh Railway (East Zone) today paid Taka 5,000 each to 12 injured persons of April 16 rail accident at Kadamtali here, a Railway Press release said today, reports BSS.

General Manager of the Railway, Lutfor Rahman, handed over the amount to the injured persons now undergoing treatment at the Railway and the Chittagong Medical College Hospitals.

a clear-cut decision about the form of government. In this connection, he said the Acting President had also expressed his desire for immediate handing over power to the elected government.

Menon expressed resentment over the reported dismissal of five leaders of Chittagong Port Agents, Stevedores and Contractors Employees' Union and non-payment of their salary and bonus.

He termed the present government as a government of dual power saying such a system could not linger for long and as such there was need for

'Video-cassettes harming our film industry'

Film Society, Mrs. Dilara Zaman, the function was addressed, among others, by M. Serge Degallaix, Ambassador of France in Bangladesh and M. Andri Raynouard, Director of L'Alliance Francaise.

Nurul Huda said most of the film makers in the country were making their film only to have their investments returned with some profits. As a result, the quality of films had reduced sharply in the last decade, he added. He pointed out the colossal damage of our film industry through infiltration of video cassettes with fantasy films.

In the context, the State Minister called upon all concerned to gather knowledge from the quality foreign films including the french films.

Task force to combat diarrhoeal diseases

An emergency review meeting on diarrhoea, which broke out in an epidemic form in six southern districts, held at the Health Ministry's Conference Room Saturday, decided to form a task force in each affected district under the overall supervision of the local MPs, reports BSS.

The meeting, held with Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Eusuf in the chair, worked out detailed measures to be taken to contain the disease.

According to the decisions, the respective Deputy Commissioner will work as co-ordinator of the task force. The other members of the task force will be the Civil Surgeon, the Superintendent of Police, the Deputy Director (Family Planning), the Deputy Director (Ansar and VDP), the Executive Engineer (Public Health Engineering), the District Information Officer, Senior Health Education Officer, the local elite and the head of the local private organisations. The task force will send daily report to the Health Ministry regarding the measures to be taken to cope with the situation.

Among others, the task force will take decision and action to ensure adequate supply and distribution of emergency medicines in the affected areas, identify exact problems, install required number of tubewells and slab latrines. Besides, the task force will organise proper publicity in villages and hats and bazaars to create awareness and educate people about various aspects of the disease through miking, poster and field publicity.

Shopowner shot at in city

A Shopowner was wounded by gun shot on Saturday noon at Stadium market in the city in a clash with another shopowner.

The victim Mohammad Ali was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The reason of the incident could not be known.

When contacted Motijheel police could not say anything in this regard.

Ibrahim Memorial Lectures begin April 28

The second Justice Ibrahim Memorial Lecture Series will be held on April 28 and 29 at 10 am at the Dhaka University Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium.

National Professor Abdur Razzak will inaugurate the lecture series, organised by Justice Ibrahim Memorial Foundation.

Professor Muhammad Afsar Uddin of Dhaka University Sociology Department will give lecture "Individual, Society and State".

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- Sorrow
- That woman
- to order
- Miner's Daughter
- Ordnance
- Again
- River in Germany
- Painful spots
- High card
- Samarium symbol
- Stalk
- Math term
- Teutonic deity
- Penicillin
- Capital of Oregon
- Pry noisily
- Vandal
- Lincoln nickname
- Unemployed
- Cooling

DOWN

- King toppers
- device
- Greek letter
- Crafty
- Threepenny
- Fracts
- Epic poetry
- Note of scale
- Negative prefix
- Dry
- Steenbergen ID
- Southern blackbird
- The
- Ocean
- Without outside help
- Pair of horses
- Qweing
- Grains
- Orders
- Possesses
- Spanish article
- Wild plums
- Damage
- Female sheep
- Mother
- Collection
- of facts
- Tweelfth month
- Pitcher
- Foot rest
- Bridge
- Footwear
- Not hollow
- Bright star
- Roof edges
- Orisk
- slowly
- Horse's meal
- Period of time
- Everglade st.
- Footless article
- Sharpen
- Suppose
- Three-toed sloth
- Wear away
- accompl
- Ms. Mears
- Japanese native
- Liquely
- Simple (child's game)
- Mountain on Crete
- A Beatty
- Musical as written
- Printer's measure
- Negative

Answer to Previous Puzzle

ASPERASCALL
LEOGATEARIA
MATATTEMPTED
ELAND EDIT
TO ANY AUTO
AGRODD WIPES
IRHAD BANAS
DETER YINAMA
EWER RUT AG
ALAR AMEND
COLLECTED NEE
ABED ELLA TAN
DIGS REAM STY

Sher-e-Bangla award for 8

By Staff Correspondent

Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Smriti Sangsad has named the winners of its 'Sher-e-Bangla national gold award' for the years 1989 and 1990.

According to a press release issued Saturday, the winners of the 1989 award are: Prof. Kabir Choudhury (education and literacy), Abdul Gaffar Choudhury (lyrics on the historical Language Movement and essays on Sher-e-Bangla), Ataur Rahman (poem) and Alhaj Taher Sobhan (industry and social welfare).

Those won the award for 1990 are: Prof Syed Maksud Ali (education and writing books on political science), Alhaj Md Makbul Hossen (industry and social welfare), Khandaker Khaleq (life-sketch of Sher-e-Bangla) and Mohammad Yaqub Ali (teaching).

The award includes a gold medal and a certificate which will be delivered at a function to be held on April 27 at 4 pm at the premises of Sher-e-Bangla's mazar in the city.

Meanwhile, Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Smriti Sangsad, Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Gabeshana Kendra, Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangathan and Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Foundation have taken up a joint programme to observe the 28th anniversary of death of Sher-e-Bangla on April 27.

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3 flights weekly nonstop.

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