

Dhaka Day by Day

Hankering for the Heritage

by Fayza Haq

When Rebecca Gurung, 25, returns to Bhutan at the end of the month she will be her country's first architect. She is naturally very excited about going back to her country and doing something creative.

She looks like a High School student but she has strong opinions of her own. What sort of architecture will she go in for? "I will cater for modern technology with traditional architectural elements. In other words the buildings will not be modern to look at but the technology will be new. In Bhutan they make the houses with mud and stone. The roof is of wooden beams and barks of trees. I will use cement, concrete and tiles, but will stick to the same original oriental patterns".

Rebecca makes it clear. "I won't go in for multistoried buildings because people do not need it as we have a lot of land. The population is 1.5 million only. While our people might admire high-rise buildings in Bombay or Calcutta they do not want it for themselves."

The young architect stresses, "I love traditional architecture. I like decorating the house with colourful motifs, and designs on pillars, doors and windows. I am proud of my country's wood carvings and believe they must be maintained. Modern buildings can be seen everywhere in the world. Traditional ones are special in this age."

She further explains, "Our soil condition is not good for high-rise. We already live at an altitude. We prefer living near the ground. We have plenty of space."

Talking about the things she will keep in mind while constructing houses and offices, she says, "I'll keep the circulation of the people in view, for a start. I will stress on ventilation and light. The placements of bedrooms, toilets and entry are very important when building a house. In public buildings, the reception, waiting room and office rooms are all vital."

Rebecca has been doing an architectural course for five years in Bangladesh which stretched on to a year and a half more, due to political situations prevailing in the country. She studied at a Darjeeling convent, St. Joseph's, did her Intermediate, and then got herself a Colombo Plan scholarship.

While studying Architectural History Rebecca liked the architecture of India most. "There is such a variety", she comments. "There is the Indus Valley Civilization which is primitive, then there is the Vedic architecture

of the Hindus along the Ganges. The Muslim architecture like the Kutub Minar, Red Fort and the Taj Mahal are wonders of all time. I certainly admire the Indian temples and mosques."

"If I get a scholarship to do my Masters I would prefer to go to USA and do 'Urban Planning', Rebecca confides.

Did she have any difficulties while she was studying? "Many of the lectures such as those of Sociology and Psychology were in Bangla, and there were sometimes no text books but simply leaflets. I had to rely on my friends to help me out. I knew Hindi before coming to Dhaka, and this helped. The spice in the curries bothered me at first but I got used to it somewhat. There was not much variety in the food in the BUET hostel. The mosquitoes were another menace" she narrates.

Suggesting ways of reducing the congestion of the roads in Dhaka, Rebecca believes,

"The rickshaws should be reduced and more taxis introduced as has been done in India and Pakistan. They should also redistribute the commercial zone."

Talking of some ways for reducing the flood waters the young architect feels, "It is necessary to have adequate canals to drain out the water. There is no proper drainage system in the city. They build commercial zones on top of canals. The drainage system and sewerage system are ignored. Water should be drained out of the city into canals and rivers."

"The environment must be kept clean. There are laws and bylaws about buildings and these should be followed instead of going in for cheap and hurried constructions," are some more of her comments.

What did she think of Old Dhaka? She found it extremely congested, but was fascinated by the old carvings in some of the buildings.

Rebecca has been to Moinamati and Sonargaon, and felt that the historical objects could have been better preserved.

While her father is a school teacher, most of Rebecca's sisters work. One is a banker, another is a lecturer at a teachers' training institute, a third is a doctor in a hospital, while yet another works in the Bhutan Customs, in Calcutta.

Women are slowly but surely coming out to work in Bhutan, assures the young architect, although the jobs they take to are usually that of teachers and nurses.



Rebecca Gurung

Biman flights rescheduled

Biman have rescheduled its Dhaka-Saidpur and Dhaka-Rajshahi flights in order to avoid delay because of bad weather, reports UNB.

Under the revised schedule effective from Sunday, both the flights are to leave Zia International Airport at 7.15 am everyday.

The first flight to Chittagong will also leave Dhaka at 7 am, says a Biman press release.

Passengers have been requested to contact Biman's Motihel sales counter to make necessary correction in their tickets.

Nurse found dead

A nurse was found dead at her duty room of IDPH at Moakhal T.B Hospital, Sunday morning, police said, reports UNB.

Anna Mary Rozario (40) who was on duty overnight, was found dead on a bed by her colleagues at about 7 in the morning.

Her body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy and an unnatural death case was registered with Gulshan police.

PROGRAMME

Sanskriti Forum

Sanskriti Forum, a national socio-cultural organisation, has arranged to hold an emergency press conference at Ball Room, Sonargaon Hotel at 4 pm today (Monday). Abul Ehsan, ex-Ambassador and Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Forum, will address on the situation and talk about the remedial measures to be adopted at this crucial juncture of the nation.

Press conference

A press conference of Workers Party will be held today at 10 am at party central office at Tophkhana Road. General Secretary of the Party Rashid Khan Menon will discuss the situation prevailing in the cyclone-affected coastal areas and focus his party's work.

Seminar

A seminar on "Flood Control: US Experience" jointly organized by Department of Water Resources Engineering, BUET and USAID, Dhaka, will be held today at 3 pm at the Seminar Room, Civil Engineering Building, BUET. Fred Bayley, Director, Directorate of Engineering for the Lower Mississippi Valley Division, US will deliver the lecture.

Statistical seminar

JU Correspondent

SAVAR, May 12: A statistical seminar of one-day was held at the Jahangirnagar University May 10 under the auspices of the Bangladesh Statistical Association (BSA).

Vice Chancellor Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed inaugurated the seminar as chief guest while President of BSA Abdus Salam presided.

Secretary General of BSA Dr. Ashrafuddin Ahmed, former Secretary General of BSA Prof M Kabir and the Chairman of the Statistics Department Dr Kanchan Chowdhury also spoke.

Papers were presented by Dr M K Chowdhury, Dr Qazi Abdus Samad, Dr Shariqul Islam, M Nurul Islam, Maksud Samad, Dilip Kumar Bhadra, Dr Rowshan Jahan, Dr Nizamuddin Sarker, Mizanur Rahman, Golam Kibria, Forhad Husain, Bakilillah, Azrul Haq and Dr Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina receives relief goods, Tk 1.5 lakh

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Chief of Bangladesh Awami League Sheikh Hasina on Sunday received cash and relief goods from the people of all walks of life at Bangabandhu Bhaban.

The relief goods received by Sheikh Hasina include rice, wheat, biscuits, medicines, cloth, kerosene, matches, water cans and utensils. The amount of money she received on Sunday was Taka over 1,50,000, the press release said.

CPB

Two relief teams of Communist Party of Bangladesh have left for cyclone affected areas. A team led by CPB central committee member Rathin Chakravarty and Dhaka city committee Secretary Muniruzzaman has left for Chittagong. Another team led by central leader Utpal Shaha and Mohammad Muteleb has left for Bhola, says a party press release.

The party has been helping the tornado-hit people of Gazipur by giving them construction materials and manual help.

Weather

Tornadoes likely

A west or north-westerly kalbaisakhi squall is likely to hit one or two places over Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Noakhali, Comilla and Sylhet today at a speed of 90-120 kilometer per hour or more, Met office said, reports UNB.

In its forecast valid for the next 24 hours till 6 pm Monday it said, rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Khulna division.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged during the period over the country. Met office recorded 6 mm rainfall at Bogra, 4 mm at Mairajidpur and 1 mm at Comilla during the last twelve hours till 6 pm Sunday.

Meanwhile, a low that formed Friday over South-East Bay and adjoining South Andaman sea remained static at the same location this evening. Met office said adding that a hurricane that formed at the Pacific ocean, moved towards west and now about 1,000 km East of Philippines.

Sunday's maximum temperature in Dhaka was 32.4 degree Celsius and the minimum 20.5 degrees. Rajshahi experienced the highest temperature of 38.2 degrees.

Percentage of humidity was 85 in the morning and 67 in the evening. Sun sets today at 6.33 pm and rises on Tuesday at 5.17 am.

An Eye-witness Account

Night of unexpected doom

By Naila Hossain Chowdhury

That night of the unexpected doom! So much predicted, so much warned of by the weather prophets yet so unbelievable! Its intensity and its velocity were both beyond imagination.

Too much of pain, too much of suffering. Yet people thrive. From moment to moment. Life keeps on struggling. Everyone clutching at the last straw and afraid of asking for more. Oh Allah, give us strength, they beseeched. But it was one of the nights when all prayers were left unanswered.

Stuck in a hospital room with a dehydrated child I could ask for nothing more. Constantly I reminded myself God is great. It'll stop right now maybe a minute more. But the hurricane knew no stopping. It sped up and up and went beyond description. All the windows were shattered. Trees were smashing against them. It felt as if the concrete

building would give in any moment. It was all shivers. All the huts and slum shanties were razed to the ground. All things lay still other than the hurricane which had usurped all life. And it roared and roared. Hours passed with no sign of its getting tired. It had all the strength of the universe. There was nothing it spared.

In the midst of the overwhelming incessant howling rose feeble voices of men and women, praying to Allah. For nine long hours it went on, the agony of man growing with it.

Morning came with the wind still blowing hard. Coastal areas and Chittagong have been totally cut off from the capital and the outside world. No electricity, no water and no telephone.

Chittagong looked like a ghost town looking as though thousands of ghosts had stamped all over it. Not one

green leaf was in sight. Everything looked barren and harsh. The force of wind pressed down all trees and then were tossed around like toys. So were tin roofs. The industrial area was mowed to the ground. Hill-top houses, the Chittagong beauties, were left with no roof. All the roads were blocked with uprooted trees. Absolutely nothing was left undisturbed. All the electric poles were felled and torn apart.

On the other side Karnaphuli looked all bashed and fettered with the leftovers of trawlers smashed against each other. Tow-ships were tangled and piled one upon the other like club sandwiches. Some portions of sunken ships showed through the water. As far as my eyes went, there was nothing but destruction.

The Skalmion crane lay there drowning after hitting the Karnaphuli Bridge right in the centre and sinking along

with it. Opposite was the once green Anwar village now submerged in water with bodies floating all around. One ship hit a factory wall near the bridge. How it managed to cross over, God alone knows.

And still that was nothing compared to what happened along Patenga. Twenty-foot high tidal surge gushed down the Port City 10-12 miles from the beach. Land was submerged under ten feet water. Swamping the prosperous EPZ to nothing. The roads to the beach were washed away. The proud Navy cannons near Patenga beach were there no more. Thousands and thousands of dead bodies washed ashore along with cattle carcasses.

The dead looked as though they still wanted a helping hand. Most of the bodies stuck to the sand with their hands raised up as though struggling to get up — but where? Bodies were swollen beyond imagination. Dead mothers still clung to their babies protectively.

Chittagong airport was an unearthly sight with arrays of planes and helicopters smashed and submerged in water. Planes were tossed helter-skelter. One X-Ray machine was bobbing in and out of water and no longer inside the terminal. The shops on the Airport Road had caved in roofs and collapsed walls.

Not a ship was there other than the battered ones. One got stuck on the shore badly. One ship rode up the adjacent Airport Road, breaking the railway line and banging into the protection wall of one of the bungalows of the oil company.

Air Force bombs were floating along the Patenga Road, along with lots of other things. Some bodies stuck to the barbed wires helplessly. Navy people looked dazed and devastated. My heart ached with pain. There was water everywhere but not a drop for the survivors. Their fate seems bleak, with the epidemic of dysentery and cholera already threatening. Their despair expressed so eloquently with eyes dazed and glassy, their helplessness making the living look dead.

People rushed with food and water. So did we, with our friends. The sight was heart-breaking. Nothing to console anyone with.

Tears rolled ceaselessly from the eyes of the onlookers. Nobody could control their feelings. The pain was shared equally by all. Words were not needed. Just a grain of food from each helping hand will be like a drop of water to the parched up souls. That only will give an ocean of strength to the survivors.

(The writer, a former school teacher, lives in Chittagong and was in a hospital during the night of the devastating cyclone.)

\$ 218 million aid pledges from abroad so far

The country till Sunday received external aid commitment to the tune of 218.01 million US dollars from friendly countries and international agencies, reports BSS.

Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Secretary External Relations Division of the Finance Ministry said the latest country to offer aid is Brunet, Darusalam when it announced to provide 100,000 US dollars to the cyclone victims of Bangladesh.

Twenty-nine countries and five international agencies have so far announced their pledges to help Bangladesh overcome the situation arising out of the worst natural calamity of the century.

The Bangladesh government, which is assessing the extent of damage to its economy, has been assured by donors and international financial institutions like World Bank and Asian Development Bank of support in the rehabilitation programme, Chowdhury said.

Besides Saudi Arabia, which topped the list with 106 million dollars, the other major donors are EEC (21 million dollars), Japan (10 million dollars), UK (8.8 million dollars), Italy (8 million dollars), USA (7.125 million dollars), Norway (6.74 million dollars) and India (6.4 million dollars).

Meanwhile, a follow-up meeting will be held today (Monday) between the government and representatives of development partners and international organisations and agencies to firm up aid pledge.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will preside over a preparatory meeting in the afternoon where long-term rehabilitation programme will be discussed threadbare, ERD sources said.

Describing the response from the donors as "good", the sources said the country has intimated the donors of the needs on May 2 on the basis of preliminary estimate of losses.

T & T suffers Tk 50 cr loss

CHITTAGONG, May 12: State Minister for Tele-Communications Shamsul Islam Sunday said that the T and T department had suffered a loss of Taka 50 crore owing to April 29 cyclone storm and tidal surge in Chittagong region, reports BSS.

Addressing a press conference at the Department Rest House Sunday afternoon he said that a three-phase rehabilitation programme had been taken for the department which would be implemented gradually.

Under the first phase programme engineers and technicians restored four telephone and two telex channels between Dhaka and Chittagong. Restoration of power supply helped the T and T Department accomplish this task, he said.

He said that under the second phase a microwave antenna would be set up shortly on a hillock near Chittagong city in order to restore tele-communications service. Japanese and T and T engineers have been working. This would be a temporary arrangement under Ultra High Frequency system. Chittagong Dry Dock and Chittagong Port are extending assistance. When this phase will be completed tele-communication links between Chittagong and Dhaka and foreign countries would be restored, he added.

The third phase of T and T rehabilitation programme includes construction of a 120 metre high microwave tower in Chittagong which would be able to sustain 350 KPH wind. Contact is being made with foreign countries for assistance. It may take six to eight months to complete the tower, he said.

The recent cyclone storm destroyed 87.5 metre high microwave tower on Paradise hill as a result of which tele-links between Chittagong and Dhaka and foreign countries was disrupted.

'Joy Bangla Parishad' formed

A new organisation Joy Bangla and Shadinata Parishad has been formed with 35 members with a view to upholding the image of Joy Bangla to the new generation, a press release said.

Mafzur Rahman and Md. Nuruzzaman have been selected joint convenors of the parishad.

Abu Hena awarded

Dr Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal, a poet, critic, researcher, composer and an essayist has been awarded Sadat Ali Akhand Literary Award (posthumous) for 1991, reports BSS.

This was announced by Bangla Academy Sunday on the occasion of the 20th death anniversary of Sadat Ali Akhand.

Award in photography

By Staff Correspondent

Shakoor Majid, a fourth year student, Department of Architecture, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) won the fourth prize in an international photographic competition organised by Lensview Photographic Society of the USA, a press release said.

The competition was based on "Bangladesh: Its Tradition and Culture". Forty Bangladeshis participated in the competition.

Donation for scholarship

Justice (Retd) Abdul Wadud Chowdhury, on behalf of his brothers and sisters, handed over a cheque of an amount of Tk. one lac to Prof M Maniruzzaman Miah, Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka Sunday at the latter's office for preserving the memory of their mother Late Umm-e Arefa Khatun, says a press release.

From the income of the donation a scholarship will be awarded every year to one who will stand first in the First Professional MBBS examination from the Dhaka Medical College.

Prof. Maniruzzaman Miah thanked Justice Chowdhury for the donation.

Seven industries start functioning

A number of cyclone-affected industries in Chittagong have started functioning again with the combined efforts of the workers, employees, management and government, according to an official source, reports BSS.

Some of these industries are Karnafuly Rayon Mills, Karnafuly Paper Mills, Barabkunda Chemical Company, Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Factory, Cement Klinker Factory, Osmania Glass Factory and Chittagong Steel Mills.

Cleaning and repair works of all the affected industries are continuing in full swing. Industries Minister Sham-

sul Islam Khan visited some of the industries affected by the cyclone and tidal bore and held meetings with the workers, employees, management and owners.

The Minister assured of all possible government assistance for repair and reconstruction to bring the industries into full production within the minimum possible time. He also called upon them to work ceaselessly to increase production.

In the meantime, a 30-member experts team of the government is assessing the quantum of damage caused to the private industries.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- Clan
- In what manner?
- Let fall
- Rabbit
- Fruit drink
- Danish island
- "— Eleven"
- Named
- Orca, e.g.
- Distributes the cards
- Former Russian ruler
- Examination
- "You —"
- Carries
- Lamprey
- Charles' Princess
- Turf
- Agave plant
- Dolt; blockhead
- Pays

DOWN

- attention
- Flying mammal
- Corrida
- Possessive pronoun
- "Easy —"
- Coalition;
- Snakes
- Horse's headgear
- Will of "The Waltons"
- Time gone by
- Labels
- Hearing organs
- Timid
- Narrow, flat board
- River ducks
- Possesses
- Hypothetical force
- Damp
- Tropical fruits
- Tell
- Herasher of the Dodgers
- Seed containers
- Tidy
- Roman date
- "Days of —"
- Wine and —
- "The Famous —"
- Fuzz
- Inlet
- Pedal digit
- Greek letter
- Illuminated
- Cattle food
- German title
- Pickle variety
- Pertaining to groom's partner
- Looks askance
- Single items
- "— of Angels"
- Mental image
- Gymnast
- Korbut
- Snug retreat
- Algonquian Indian
- Lad
- Proceed

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	L	P	C	H	E	R	C	A	P		
S	I	L	O	T	A	R	O	H	U	E	
P	E	A	R	L	P	R	E	S	E	N	T
T	R	O	O	P	S	E	A	T	S		
T	R	E	Y	P	E	P	A	T			
R	U	N	T	I	N	S	E	L	A	X	
E	N	S	O	N	A	N	E	L	M		
E	T	P	R	E	E	N	S	P	E	A	
T	O	Y	N	T	T	I	E	S			
A	T	O	P	S	T	A	L	A	G		
C	O	N	S	O	L	E	A	I	R	E	
R	U	G	D	O	R	M	L	A	V	E	
E	R	S	A	P	S	E	S	M	E	E	

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