

Dhaka Day by Day

Welcome Home

by S Bari

Flying is always a somewhat humbling experience. When you have managed to cram the bare necessities of life into your twenty-kilo luggage allowance, there are another twenty left to distribute among your handbags. You reach the airport at the eleventh hour, and the man at security eyes you as you struggle desperately to make your four pieces of hand baggage look like one. Finally on the aircraft, you squeeze into seats designed for undernourished ten-year olds and try to get some sleep.

Arrival at Zia International Airport is excitement itself for the long-time expatriate. You have tried your best to remain neat and presentable, but as the wave of heat off the tarmac engulfs you, make-up slips down your face and sweat circles of increasing circumference appear on your shirt. What is worse, a woman ahead of you has somehow changed into a crisp sari, every fold in place, hair impeccably tied, high heels matching her handbag (how she managed all this in a plane toilet is too horrible to contemplate).

Your welcome to Dhaka has only begun. All emotional at returning and being able to speak Bengali to an airport official, you hand your passport to the man at immigration. But immigration people are apparently under strict orders to finger your documents suspiciously, as if your nationality were a matter of some doubt. He then questions you as to the origin of each stamp on every single page. After a sixteen-hour flight, remembering whether you entered Egypt on the 3rd or 4th of July four years ago can be taxing. But the man behind the window thinks this is vital to your security clearance.

When immigration is fairly convinced of your credibility, it launches into query mode. How long you have worked abroad, what your father's elder brother's wife's cousin does for a living, where you bought your jacket, all these are of consuming interest to Mr Nothing-petter-to-do. In the meantime, the hundreds behind you in the line paw the ground impatiently, casting murderous glances your way.

It is then time to declare your foreign currency. Since it is an ancient airport custom to leave most of the booths unmanned, you resort to inquiring at the offices, where men lounge nonchalantly at their desks. If you're lucky,

they will do you the enormous favour of handing you a form to fill out. Meanwhile, your luggage is taking so long to appear on the conveyor belt you begin to suspect it was sent by ship. Finally, there it is, behind the plastic buckets and VCR sets.

Customs awaits you with open arms (and open palms). Officials lie in wait for easy prey. What follows is a true account. A passenger pushes his trolley up to the inspection desk in the "nothing to declare" section. The hefty officer watches the passenger heave the suitcase up on to the table; he makes a point of not lifting a finger. "Well, well, what have we here?" "Old clothes and personal items," replies the passenger. The officer nods his head disbelievingly. A waiting game ensues, the passenger

wondering what to do next, the officer expecting a financial offer, or at least a packet of cigarettes. When neither is forthcoming, either because the passenger is unversed in the etiquette of bribery or because he is stubborn, the officer angrily asks for the suitcase to be searched. As the innocent contents spill out (though this is in theory a walk-through green channel) and the officer continues to treat the home-comer like a confirmed criminal, real smugglers stroll past with their bags openly laden with dutiable goods.



Coming home is not always what you expect! — Star Photo.

Not having found anything worthy of his attention, the officer strides away. The returned native can re-pack the suitcase by himself. Pushing the trolley out of the danger zone, the passenger expects to collapse into the welcoming arms of waiting relatives. But since the flight is eight hours late, and information service is barely available, there is no reception committee. Instead, a lone telephone (tucked away at the far end of the corridor) asks for 25 paise. Have you ever arrived in Dhaka from Los Angeles or Zurich or Lusaka with a 25 paise coin in your pocket?

From nowhere, an old porter appears. A toothless smile, and he pats your arm. Do you need any help, he wonders. Soon a coin emerges from the dirty folds of a lungi. Your offer of a five taka note in return for his concern is rejected vehemently. As you pick up the receiver, he smiles again, and for the first time you feel truly welcome back home.

PROGRAMME

Discussion

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Matamat Kendra will hold a discussion meeting on "Violence in the Educational Institutions: Reasons and Solutions" at the Jatiya Press Club today (Saturday) at 4 pm.

Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury will attend the discussion as the chief guest.

Those who will take part in the discussion are: Dr Rafiqur Rahman, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, former Foreign Secretary Tabarak Hossain, Dr Ershadul Bari, Chairman of the Department of Law, Dhaka University, Gias Kamal Chowdhury, journalist, Amanullah Kabir, Secretary General of BFUJ, Poet Al Mujahedi and Abul Asad, Editor of Khalid Sangram.

Khaleda visits Runu's house

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Friday visited the Mohammadpur residence of late Jafar Islam Runu, Vice-President of the Mohammadpur Thana Committee of Jatiyatadhi Chhatra Dal (JCD), who was assassinated on June 12, reports BSS.

Begum Zia stayed with the family members of the deceased student leader for some time and consoled them.

Two students held for extortion

By Staff Correspondent

Police on Thursday arrested two students for allegedly trying to extort money from Sonargaon Market at Kataban in the city.

The arrested students are Nazmul Huda and Mahbubur Rahman.

Kataban Market Malik Samity complained that the shop owners of that area have been passing a bad time as a number of youths are extorting money from them almost everyday through intimidation and showing arms.

They appealed to the authorities concerned to look into their problem.

Publication ceremony held

The publication ceremony of a book on the life of noted painter S M Sultan written by Hasnat Abdul Hye was held at the German Cultural Centre here on Friday, reports BSS.

Presided over by eminent novelist Prof. Shawkat Osman, the function was addressed by Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, Syed Ahmed, Prof. Anisuzzaman and veteran Journalist Nazimuddin Haskin.

TV Saturday

- 5.00 Opening: Recitation from Al Quran
- 5.15 Recitation from the Tripitak
- 5.20 News in Bangla
- 5.30 Sports world
- 5.55 Cartoon film: Gelegance Planet
- 6.30 Naba Taranga: Programme of new artistes
- 7.05 Bashari: Folk songs
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 The Koahbi Show
- 9.00 Bhuli Kemoney: Songs programme
- 10.00 News in English
- 11.25 Parliament roundup
- 10.40 Drama series: Return to Eden
- 11.30 Khabar/News
- 11.45 Closing

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Light to moderate rain or shower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over the country during the next 24 hours ending 6 am on Sunday, Meteorological Department reports.

On Friday the highest temperature recorded at Satkhira district was 33.1 degree Celsius while the lowest temperature recorded at Sylhet and Mymensingh districts was 24.5 degree Celsius.

The day temperature till Sunday morning may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The Dhaka city witnessed light rainfall activities on Friday. An 11 mm downpour was recorded in the city. Sylhet experienced highest rainfall of 48 mm. Rainfall in Rajshahi was 30 mm, Rangpur 17 mm, Tangail 15 mm, Faridpur 13 mm, Jessore 11 mm, Barisal 10 mm and Dinajpur 10 mm.

Outlook for subsequent two days: No appreciable change. Extended outlook for another five days: Rainfall activities is likely to decrease.

The suns set today (Saturday) at 6.48 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 5.11 am.

Temperature and humidity in some cities and towns of the country on Friday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	31.5	26.6
Chittagong	30.6	25.2
Rajshahi	30	26.4
Khulna	32.2	26.7
Rangpur	31	25.6
Cox's Bazar	31.4	25.2
Sylhet	30	24.5
Comilla	30.5	26
Rangamati	31.6	25
Jessore	32.4	27
Barisal	31	26
Satkhira	33.1	27.5
Mymensingh	30.2	24.5

Mass literacy programme to be launched again

Minister for Education and Cultural Affairs Prof Badrud-doza Chowdhury on Friday said that the present government was pledge-bound to reach education to every nook and corner of the country despite constraints and limitations of resources, reports BSS.

He said the government would re-launch the mass literacy programme soon to fulfill its objective of educating the nation in a wide scale as dreamt by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

The Education Minister was speaking as the chief guest at the annual general meeting of Dhaka based Feni Samity at Ziaur Rahman auditorium at Shishu Academy in Dhaka.

A function was also organised in this connection to accord reception to and distribute certificates and stipends among the meritorious students of Feni district now studying in various institutions all over the country.

Presided over by the samity's President Mohammad Mosharrar Hossain, the function was also addressed, among others, by State Minister for Textiles Major (Retd) M

A Mannan, Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Mahbubul Alam, former Presidential Adviser Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Brig Amin Ahmad Chowdhury, Journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury and the samity's General Secretary Md. Sarwar Jahan.

The Education Minister said at least 40,00,000 (fortylakh) people were taught three Rs under the mass literacy programme launched by Shaheed Zia but this people oriented programme was stalled by the autocratic regime which snatched power from the BNP government in 1982.

"If continued, at least 85 per cent people of the country could have been made literate by now under the mass literacy programme," Choudhury said adding that the government gave top priority to education sector by allocating the highest amount of money in the coming fiscal.

Prof Chowdhury said the government would re-launch other development programmes of late President Zia for all-out development of the country and sought whole-hearted cooperation from the people of all strata towards the

efforts of the present democratic government.

"We will exert all our efforts on building ourselves as a self-reliant and self-conscious nation but "we need your cooperation" the Minister said.

Speaking on the occasion as special guest, State Minister for Textiles Major (Retd) MA Mannan said that the construction of the cross dam in the south of Feni district would begin next year with the financial help from the Netherlands government. After the construction of the dam, the district would benefit agriculturally and be saved from natural calamities, he said.

Besides, the State Minister said, the government would expand the countrywide handloom industries as a result of which both employment and production would be increased. "The government will also supply handloom materials to the people of Feni district so that this sector can get a healthy take off from there," he said.

Major Mannan also said that the government would also take up a massive plan for mulberry plantation in Feni district.

SAARC planners' meet begins today

The sixth annual meeting of the planners from the SAARC countries will begin in Dhaka today, reports BSS.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will inaugurate the meeting at the International Conference centre at 10 am.

The theme of the three-day meeting is "decentralised participatory planning for human resource development". Besides, cooperation among the SAARC countries in areas of trade, manufacturing and services, plan for modelling technique, national disaster management perspective planning and other important issues will also be discussed in the meeting.

Distinguished planners of SAARC countries will attend the meeting.

One killed in road mishap

A pedestrian was killed when he was knocked down by a speeding truck at Biswa Road on Thursday night.

Md. Idrish Ali (60) was severely injured when the truck (Dhaka Metro 8984) hit him. He was rushed to DMCH where he succumbed to his injuries.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

- ACROSS**
- 1 Drink slowly
 - 4 Reel
 - 9 Emmet
 - 12 Macaw
 - 13 Red-yellow in hue
 - 14 Horsley or Remick
 - 15 "Midnight"
 - 17 Symbol
 - 19 "— of Eden"
 - 21 Lansbury ID
 - 22 Resound
 - 25 Be in debt
 - 27 Plaster
 - 31 Fish eggs
 - 32 Of unknown authorship
 - 34 Spanish article
 - 35 Transgress
 - 36 River in Scotland
 - 37 Agee plant
 - 38 Finishes
- DOWN**
- 2 A Gerashwin
 - 3 Crony
 - 4 Stadium of N.Y. Mets
 - 5 Body of office workers
 - 6 "— Golden Pond"
 - 7 The loneliest number
 - 8 Tibetan priest
 - 9 Everyone
 - 10 Born
 - 11 Pro —

Answer to Previous Puzzle

LIST	SEC	SPAT
ANTI	AGO	ELLA
NEAR	TON	SOAP
DEBATE	TRADES	
	DO	GRIM
TAPE	PROCEEDS	
EIR	ORALE	LIE
TRESPASS	TAPA	
	PACS	MA
RESULT	PEBBLE	
ARAR	IDA	LOOK
FINN	CAW	EDIE
TEDS	EMS	SEND



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