

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Under the Bridges of Paris

by Fayza Haq

Rifat Rashid, who is the Scientific Collaborator at the Centre for Scientific and Technological Information at the Embassy of France/Alliance Francaise, had a fairly easy time collecting her PhD from Sorbonne. Rifat combined her studies with her marriage to a chartered accountant in London and having two children.

Did she have a smooth sailing at the Sorbonne at the outset?

"You had to participate in discussions in French and I felt shy. My command over the language was not all that marvellous, and I did not know many people," she admitted.

Living in mixed dorms with common toilets and showers was also something new and overwhelming for her. "To go about the city on my own was difficult too, as I had been cosseted as an only daughter. Again I was not used to budgeting. I did not have the system of pocket money in Bangladesh. Also, I did not find the food in the cafeteria all that pleasant at first. But it did not take very long for me to develop a taste for couscous, which you eat with meat and vegetable, and 'piella' which consists of fish and meat," she narrated.



Rifat Rashid

"It was only in the 80's when I was a student cum a housewife and commuted between London and Paris that I found the burden of housework overpowering," Rifat added.

How did the French take to her at Sorbonne?

"During my time there were not too many Indians or Bangladeshis. I was treated with politeness. Since I wore a 'sari' sometimes the student community would come up to me and admire me. Nobody looked down on me. I knew the French but it was not easy to be an integral part of the French society. I remained, however, a part of the international community," she informed me.

"There were Frenchmen and people from other places who wanted to take me out to films, theatres and restaurants. I had to explain that we did not do this back in my own country. With some the friendship was then over. But with others we remained good friends. I was pressurised to drink wine on birthdays. At first they were offended when I refused. It was not as if I wanted to stay out of their culture. Later, however, they understood," Rifat said about her life in Paris.

She said that the attitude of the French to the Indian and Bangladeshi communities was not comparable to how the British felt towards the coloured population in UK or how the white Americans sometimes feel towards the Black. Yet Rifat felt there was a feeling of displeasure for North Africans, specially the Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians. "They are aggressive in nature and have hostile feelings towards the French because they had once been exploited. This is an after effect of colonisation," Rifat commented.

Rifat, who has lived in Paris and London for 13 years said "I preferred staying in Paris rather than in London. Nobody actually pointed out that I was of Bangladeshi origin in London but

I did not feel wanted. The British were polite but cold."

Talking about marriage, Rifat said that hers had been arranged although she knew her husband's family as a child. Between London and Paris their phone bills were long before they actually met in Paris, and finally got married — even though she had at first been apprehensive about getting involved in wedlock. "Marriage is a matter of luck", she believed firmly.

Speaking about the position of women in our society the career woman commented, "Even in London and Paris the society is still

dominated by men. If a woman heads a firm it is flashed in the papers as something unusual. Women in Europe do not have equal rights even though they talk about it."

Despite her degree it is difficult for her to get a good post in Europe. "By a job I don't mean any old work as a low grade civil servant. But I'm a foreigner, have no work experience, and am moreover a woman," Rifat commented about the prospects of her having a career in Europe.

For her it is important to combine a job with a family life. This would have been difficult abroad. She

was sure that she would find a reasonably good research work in Dhaka. In Europe she would have had to put her children in the creche or with baby sitters. Here in Dhaka she has her mother and aunts to help when the children are ill or if she is late from work.

"Coming back home after 13 years I find women doing a lot of enterprising work such as small business in the form of boutiques. The NGOs also involve them in sewing and handicrafts. I find the women in the garment factories something new and encouraging. Earlier, the only jobs offered to them were that of domestic servants. 'Women in development' is a subject that is much talked about. But I'm not sure how far the government is committed to this programme," Rifat commented about female participation in work today.

Talking about why girls do not often go in for higher education in Bangladesh, she pointed out that you need a lot of money to go abroad and the availability of scholarships is limited. If finances are available, she stressed, they are allocated to the boys in the family.

She apparently enjoys her life in Dhaka. "I have a career, a family and a nice social life. This would not have been possible in Europe. You are appreciated much more in your own country. In Europe my friends would have been limited. The positive side about living in a foreign country is that you are able to earn a lot and have a good living. But this would not give me mental satisfaction. It would not have been enough to be recognised as my husband's wife alone. I needed my own identity.

This is not to say she dismissed the attraction of Europe. She admitted to missing the food, clothes and the vibrant atmosphere. She regretted that there is very little entertainment in Dhaka while in Europe you can just walk down an ordinary street or sit on a park bench and enjoy it.

### Art show in US

Bangladeshi artists living in USA have arranged a week-long art exhibition beginning today (Sunday) in aid of the cyclone victims, reports UNB.

The art show, to be held at the Dhaka Club in Los Angeles, will display 40 art pieces of three promising artists — Muraduzzaman Murad, Hossain Kabir and Afroza Jamil Konka.

Sale proceeds from the exhibition will be despatched for the people affected by the April 29 cyclone and tidal bore that battered coastal districts and offshore islands of Bangladesh, according to a message received in Dhaka Saturday.

### What's on Today & Tomorrow

#### Publication ceremony

Bangla Academy will organise a publication ceremony of the book entitled 'Quamrul Hassan' written by Dr Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir today (Sunday) at 5 pm at its auditorium. The publication of the book appears on the occasion of a solo-exhibition of the paintings by late Quamrul Hassan.

Artist Aminul Islam will preside over the function while artists Quatyyum Choudhury, Hashem Khan, Prof Nazrul Islam, Dr Nawajesh Ahmed and Prof Syed Manjural Islam will discuss on the book.

Later, the songs of old days will be rendered by Kalim Sharafi, Dalia Nowshin, Shabnam Mushtari, Papiya Sarwar, Saadi Mohammad and Shankar Chakrabarty.

#### Tagore poetry recitation

Meghdut Abritt Sangsad will organise a poetry recitation programme at the auditorium of the German Cultural Centre today (Sunday) at 4.30 pm in observance of the International Tagore Poetry Recitation Day.

Prof Anisuzzaman of the Dhaka University will attend the function as chief guest while poets Syed Shamsul Huq and Asad Choudhury will be the special guests. Prominent persons will participate in the recitation programme.

Rabindra Adhyan Chakra (study circle) will also hold a recitation programme on the poetry of Tagore at the Vishwa Sahitya Kendra at 7 pm to mark the day.

#### Lions Club of Dhaka

Lions Club of Dhaka Golden will hold its second regular monthly meeting today (Sunday) at 6 pm at Hotel Sheraton.

#### Petrobangla Engineers' Assoc

The Eid reunion of Petrobangla Engineers' Association will be held today (Sunday) at 4.30 pm at the auditorium of Engineers' Institution. All the engineers serving the Petrobangla have been requested to attend the function.

#### Ruhul Amin Smriti Sangsad

The third death anniversary of Freedom Fighter Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan will be observed today (Sunday).

In this connection a milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayer at his Nakhhalpara residence in the city on the day. It will also hold a discussion on the life and works of the late labour leader at 257/2 East Nakhhalpara office of the Sangsad on July 12.

After independence, Amin became the Labour Secretary of Awami League. He was one of the founders of Jatitya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and became the Vice-President of the JSD in 1973.

Amin had been detained in jail from 1973 to 1979 for his anti-government role.

#### Institution of Engineers

The 35th council meeting of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) will be held today (Sunday) at its Council Room at 6 pm.

All council members of the Institution have been requested to attend the meeting.

#### CPB meeting

The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will hold its three-day Central Committee preparatory meeting from tomorrow (Monday) at its central office at Purana Palton in the city.

The four-day Central Committee meeting of the party will begin on July 4 to discuss the prevailing political situation and holding of the party's fifth congress.

#### Photo exhibition

A photo exhibition, under the style 'After the Storm' by seven photographers depicting the strength and endurance of the coastal people and the efforts of relief workers to ease their plight, opens at the Alliance Francaise, at 26 Mirpur road, Dhanmondi, tomorrow (Monday) at 6.30 pm. The exhibition will continue till July 10 and it will remain open from 3.30 pm to 8 pm for visitors.

The photographers have donated their prints to raise funds for the families of relief workers who lost their lives.



After the storm

### Weather

## Thundershower likely

By Staff Correspondent

Forecast valid for 24 hours till 6 pm on Sunday: Rain or thundershower is likely to occur at few places over Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions and one or two places over Dhaka division, reports Meteorological Department.

On Saturday the highest temperature recorded at Khulna was 34 degrees Celsius while the lowest temperature recorded at Mymensingh was 23.6 degrees Celsius. The day temperature till Monday morning may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

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

Meanwhile, Bogra on Saturday experienced the highest rainfall of 32 mm while 13 mm rainfall was recorded in Jessore and 1 mm in Rajshahi.

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

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Maximum	Minimum	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.1	27	81	77
Chittagong	33.2	25.8	88	74
Khulna	34	26.2	83	86
Rajshahi	33.4	25.5	89	75
Jessore	31.8	26.5	93	91
Bogra	31.8	26.5	87	89
Rangpur	32.8	27	85	76
Barisal	32	25	86	85
Comilla	31	25	89	90
Sylhet	32.5	24.2	77	83
Mymensingh	31.5	23.6	72	85

## Fare increased on 10 occasions 1,156 killed in 3,391 railway accidents

A total of 1,156 persons were killed and 8,612 others injured in 3,391 railway accidents from 1972 till date, Communications Minister Col. (Retd) Oli Ahmad informed the Jatitya Sangsad Saturday, reports BSS.

In reply to a question from Nurul Islam Moni (Ind-Barguna), the minister said Taka 1,18,74,269 was given as compensation to the families of the victims.

on 10 occasions from 1976 to 1990, Oli Ahmad told the Jatitya Sangsad Saturday, reports BSS.

In reply to a question from Mosharrar Hossain (AL-), Railway fare was increased

Mymensingh with Netrokona), the Minister said for the time being the government had no plan to increase railway fare. He, however, said that enhancement of fare might be necessary in the near future due to inflation and increase of oil price.

Answering a question from Sheikh Haroonur Rashid Mia (AL-Khulna) the Minister said during 1990-91 fiscal, upto May 31, the western region of the railway earned Taka 76,52,11,000.

He agreed that it was partially true that many people travel led by railway without ticket. He said due to the strengthening of mobile courts, intensive checks and block checks ticket less travelling by railway decreased recently.

Besides, he said as an effective step to check travelling without ticket, station advisory committees were being formed since March 1991 at the important stations consisting of local district and upazila administrations and elite.

### CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- Lifeless
- Leo constellation
- Dove cry
- Quack
- A Griffith
- Musical variety
- Squander
- Most profound
- More uneasy resorts
- Do it again
- German title
- Neon symbol
- Uncouth fellow
- Phrase
- Native American
- Italian river
- Possessive pronoun
- Concerning
- Mice and Men

34 Farm animal

35 French article

36 Pittsburgh player

38 Chicken

39 Existed

40 Sun god

41 She's

42 Stadium occupants

43 Health resorts

44 Fine gauze

45 Shreds

46 Showy flower

47 Unit of Norwegian currency

52 "sex, — and videotapes"

54 "Othello"

55 Through

56 Church part

57 Breed of dog

58 " — and Men"

1 Condensed

Answer to Previous Puzzle

CABAL RISES  
NATURE ENAMEL  
ON TAMES MINE  
ITS LOPES RIA  
SEED NONES OS  
ERROR STATURE  
GLOW STAN  
STELLAR BITES  
TE SLIER NILE  
OLD STYD LAW  
PLAY ELDER NE  
EARIER ELUDED  
REELS SLEET

Germany  
8 Louis —  
9 Weathers in  
"Rocky IV"

10 Kin

11 Chooses

12 Teutonic deity

18 Scheme

20 Interior

22 Call

23 Grated: hereditary

25 Coffeehouse

27 Flower

28 Speaks

29 Bard

30 Possesses

34 Large African cat

36 Time gone by

37 Gets up

38 Liquid

41 "The Sound of —"

42 Hat

43 Peel

44 Journey

45 Samaritan symbol

47 Guido's high note

48 The self

50 Quarrel

53 Eggar ID

TV Sunday

5:00 Opening an nouncement recitation from Al-Quran

5:15 Recitation from the Bible

5:20 News in Bengali

5:30 Jhilmili

5:55 Cartoon: Abbot and Costello

6:20 Sports programme

7:05 Tagore song

8:00 News in Bengali

8:30 Probaha

9:00 Drama Serial: Oshin

10:00 News in English

10:30 Classical songs

11:30 Khabar/the News

11:45 Closing down



Manzur-e-Moula addressing a discussion meeting organised by Bangla Academy at its auditorium on Michael Madhusudan Datt on Saturday. From left: Dr Siddiqia Mahmuda, Prof Md Harun-ur-Rashid and Prof Kabir Chowdhury are seen.

## 8 cr deprived of education

Minister for Education and Cultural Affairs Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury Saturday said that BNP government was committed to introduce universal education for achieving cherished goal of country's development, reports BSS.

"Education must be made life-oriented so that it caters to the needs of the common people," the Minister said while addressing as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of an orientation course on "expansion of mass education programme" in Dhaka on Saturday afternoon.

Jointly organised by Mass Education Programme of the Minister of Education and UNDP, the inaugural function was presided over by Education Secretary ANM Yusuf and

addressed by State Minister for Education Principal Md Yunus Khan as special guest.

The Education and Cultural Affairs Minister said BNP government had launched Mass Education Programme under the leadership of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in 1980 and a total of 40 lakh people were given functional education within one and a half year.

## 15,000 flats for govt employees soon

The government plans to build 15,000 flats in the capital to meet accommodation problem of the government employees, reports UNB.

State Minister for Land Zamir Uddin Sircar told the House Saturday replying to Abdul Matin Khasru of Awami League.

The flats will be constructed at Banani, Darussalam and other places in the city, Sircar said.

He said the past autocratic government, which had stopped the mass education and destroyed 60 lakh books of the programme, must be held responsible to the people.

He said the growth rate of population must be checked to increase the rate of literacy. He also called upon the field level officials to put in their best efforts towards spreading education among the commonman.



Mahbubur Rahman, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) is seen welcoming the members of the trade delegation from China External Trade Development Council (CETRA) Taipei, Taiwan, in a meeting held at DCCI on Saturday. Chang, Chia-Jung, leader of the delegation is seen seated at his right.

## Khorshed President, Muyeed Secy of BCSA (Admn)

Chief Finance Secretary Khorshed Alam and Director General, President's Secretariat Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury have been elected President and Secretary General respectively of Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) Association (BCSA), reports BSS.

A BCSA press release on Saturday said the election of the 45-member executive committee of the association was held at its Annual General Meeting Friday at the BCS Training Academy in Dhaka with Khorshed Alam in the chair.

## Taiwan eager to set up joint ventures

The visiting 12-member China External Trade Development Council (CETRA) delegation from Taiwan in a meeting with Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI) on Saturday at the chamber office said the investment environment in Bangladesh is "very good."

Chia-Jung Chang, leader of the delegation which arrived on June 26, said the Taiwanese entrepreneurs are interested in joint ventures and turn-key projects in Bangladesh.

Star Economic Report

countries would be promoted and expanded in the near future.

Mahbubur Rahman, President of DCCI depicted the difficulties that exist in promotion of trade between the two countries.

Rahman said Taiwan has a reserve of ten billion US Dollar for foreign investment. He suggested that a part of the reserve could be invested in Bangladesh.

He said both the business communities in Taiwan and Bangladesh are trying to persuade the governments to open trade opportunities with each other. He stated that a trade office in each of the countries would help facilitate the business flow.

Rahman said the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh would cooperate fully with the Taiwanese counterpart in the field of trade and industry. The delegation would leave Dhaka on Sunday.

The other office bearers of the committee are: Vice-Presidents: M Mokammel Haq, Abul Hasnat, Mofazzel Karim and M A Bari.

Treasurer: Hefazuddin Ahmed, Deputy Treasurers — Khandkar Shahidul Islam and Hemyetuddin Talukder.

Joint Secretary Generals: A F G Mohiuddin, Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka (ex-officio), Mir Shahabuddin Mahmud, Kazi Reazul Haq and Mustafizur Rahman.

Assistant Secretary Generals: Dewan Afsar Uddin, Syed Shah Alam, Bastrul Haq, Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury, Meah Mustaque Ahmed, Jannat Ara Rashid and Syed Harun-Ar Rashid.

The committee also includes 25 members.

## Obituary

Begum Hazera Chowdhury, wife of late Nasimuddin Chowdhury of Dhontala, Setabganj, died on Thursday morning. She was 81. She left behind two sons, three daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and scores of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death, says a press release.

Qul-khawni of late Hazera Chowdhury will be held today (Sunday) after Asr prayers at her daughter's house adjacent to Lake View Clinic at Plot No 5, Road No 79, Gulshan. All relatives and well-wishers are requested to kindly attend the Qul-Khawni.

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