

# Dhaka Day by Day

## When Dining Out Can be a Drag

by Fayza Haq

If you do not earn a fantastic salary and have gas bills, rent and telephone bills to pay to, apart from meeting the grocery and other payments, it is hard to have a good time, when it takes your fancy to dine out. This is particularly so if you happen to be a woman in Dhaka.

The other day my friend and I went shopping to "Sonargaon" to get an item which was unavailable anywhere else in the city. This little gift for my mother was not expensive on its own. It was a set of jute mats. We had been shopping in the city earlier without success the entire morning, and felt that we needed a respite and a bit to eat. We had not the occasion to dine out before in expensive hotels and felt that a cup of tea and 'samosas' would not cost the earth. The bill was Tk 200 which was more than the cost of the mats that we had launched out to buy at the outset.

My friend also felt embarrassed that she was only wearing rubber 'chappals' and the most crushed cotton 'sari' that she had ever owned or worn to her nine to five job. As for me, I looked very much a ragamuffin myself, after my endeavour at my own office. We felt embarrassed sitting down in the sophisticated atmosphere in our ordinary

day to day clothes. The bill for the two teas and the 'samosas' was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Another time my colleague and I felt a little piqued with the daily routine at work. We decided to nip off and have a drink to rejuvenate ourselves and cut the monotony. Working in Motijheel we knew of no place that was safe enough for two working women to simply walk into and have two coffees.

The drink at Parbani was not any better than what you get at home. My friend and I chatted to iron out some problems. The time flew. And lo behold there was the bill of Tk 90 at the end of the half hour session. Yes, we enjoyed the airconditioned atmosphere for a while but for those who do not earn more than Tk 3000 or Tk 5000 a month, the local hotels are no place to sail in and have a heart to heart chat — away from the madding crowd.

It is not always that we women venture into places like Sheraton and Sonargaon to have a drink or a meal. Recently, when we got a pay packet at the beginning of the month we decided to investigate "Cafe Jheel" which is near our work place. But could we sail into such a place without male chaperonage? Certainly not. We had to have two stalwart men, or rather, we had to drag two busy and irritated men from their work, just to keep us company. The bill was perhaps reasonable. But we had dared to venture beyond tiny plate of 'kababs' and a puffed out 'nan'. We had not the means to stay on for a soft drink after the brief lunch and roped the men to walk back to office to have the tea to down the 'roti-kebab' effort at

entertainment.

A quite embarrassing effort to lunch out was when two of us had Tk 400 between ourselves and wanted to take a friend out for her birthday on New Year's Eve. Much to our consternation we discovered that there was no room at the cafe where we could buy lunch within our limits and the Chinese restaurant place had a set menu. At Cafe Jheel itself prices are as high as at least Tk 300 per head.

We cruised around the city trying to find a Chinese restaurant, our cheeks flaming with embarrassment because we had not the money to pay for bills. Here in Dhaka there is no way of washing dishes and paying off the bills as has been the custom in USA, Europe and the west for over decades.

We finally ended up in a dingy, seedy old cafe, in Dhanmandi, and had a very dull and stereotyped lunch, which was certainly too salt

and cold. The exercise not only upset us, the two hostesses, our friend and her daughter were not exactly in ecstasies at our effort to entertain. But who does not know the prices at "Panda Garden" and "Royal Orchid" or even "Kintuki." Can the average working women entertain their col-

leagues, or friends on even a blue moon? Even if you go to the "Coffee House" the bill is never less than Tk 200 for three people with all the sharing and scripping.

This is not to say there are not eating houses in places like Motijheel and Old Dhaka where you can get interesting meals including fish and "bharta" as well as mutton brains. Yet at these places you must be chaperoned, and if you come across young students who haunt these places in Old Dhaka, it is you that is taken aback having them see you dine alone, and trying to make it on the cheap.

There are then the cafes at exclusive places like the Goethe Institute and the Alliance Francaise. But these are restricted to the members and you cannot get a meal there.

The small "kebab" houses dot the city but women can hardly be expected to sit down and eat there by themselves. And how often do men take it into their minds to chaperone female colleagues and even go Dutch, if that is necessary?

One does not deny there are Chinese restaurants that dot Dhanmandi and neighbouring areas where meals may be obtained at reasonable costs. But these places are not accessible from all parts of the city. You require a transport and women are often branded as "fast" when they do take the initiative and sail out on their own.

With all that talk about women's liberation in the city, they should surely be able to go out and enjoy themselves and not have to lose their hair over the price of food and the necessity of male chaperonage.



## What's on today . . .

### Peace Council seminar

A seminar on "South Asian cooperation for peace, friendship, stability and development" will be held today (Monday) at 4.30 pm at the auditorium of Bangladesh National Museum, Shahbagh, in the city.

Bangladesh Peace Council organise the seminar. Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, Chief Whip in the Parliament Khondaker Delwar Hossain, Abdur Razzak, MP, and CPB General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Prof Kabir Choudhury, Prof Rehman Sobhan, Prof Salahuddin Ahmed, Fakhruddin Ahmed, Dr Golam Rahman and Justice KM Sobhan are expected to address the seminar. Chairman of the University Grants Commission Prof Shamsul Haq will chair the seminar.

### Rotary Club literacy project

Rotary Club of Dhaka (Dist 3280 Bangladesh), Footscray Dist 980 (Australia) and Rotary Foundation of Rotary International will jointly begin a literacy project today (Monday) at 5 pm at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Education and Cultural Affairs Minister Prof AQM Badruddoza Choudhury will inaugurate the project titled 'concentration language encounter system.'

### Moulvibazar Samity AGM

The annual general meeting of Moulvibazar Zila Samity will be held today (Monday) at 4 pm at the auditorium of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council, Farmgate in the city. Finance and Planning Minister Mohammad Saifur Rahman who is also heading the association will preside over the meeting. Members along with their families have been invited to attend the meeting.

### Islami Bank officers' meet

A general meeting of the Islami Bank Officers' Welfare Association will be held today (Monday) at 4.30 pm at the third floor at 75, Motijheel Commercial Area in the city. The meeting will discuss the proposed pay-scale for the bank staff and its officers welfare activities.

### Shilpakala Academy installation

The installation ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of Shilpakala Academy Officers' Welfare Association will be held today (Monday) at 5 pm at the academy premises. Acting Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs IU Malik will attend the ceremony as chief guest while academy Director General Kamal Lohani will be the special guest. Later, a cultural function will be held.

### Press conference

Bangladesh Vested Property Leaseholders' Welfare Association has convened a press conference today (Monday) at 5 pm at the National Press Club to reveal their problems now confronting.

## . . . and tomorrow

### Haqqani Anjuman

Haqqani Anjuman and its branches will observe the holy Ashura, the 10th day of Muharram, symbolising the great sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), grandson of the holy Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM) 1400 years ago at Karbala for establishing justice and truth.

To commemorate the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) Haqqani Anjuman, Dhaka branch will hold a discussion, offer fatiha and special prayer at the premises of Shahbaz Mosque near the mazar of the three national leaders tomorrow (Tuesday) at 9 am. Haqqani Ulema will participate in the function.

Compiled by NA

### CAB call to check price-hike of essentials

By Staff Correspondent

The Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) has called for taking concrete steps to stop the sale of adulterated food products in the upazilas and for checking price-hike of essentials on the plea of the imposition of Value Added Tax (VAT).

These demands were made on Saturday at an open discussion meeting at Kaliakoir. Organised by the CAB chapter of Kaliakoir the meeting was chaired by Dr Ali Hossain.

Speakers expressed their resentment at the lack of control on the use of tobacco products, laxity in regulating the standard and use of medicine and huge supply of baby-food items.

The speakers pointed out that consumers with meagre income are being victimised by retailers of sub-standard products. They noted that the people do not know what is actually meant by VAT.

### US Counsel meets Golam Hafiz

The visiting US Chief

Counsel of the house judiciary sub-committee on courts, intellectual property and the administration of justice, Michael J Remington, called on Mirza Golam Hafiz, Minister for Law and Justice at his Sangsad office on Sunday, reports BSS.

They discussed matters relating to judicial system of both the countries.

Later, Remington met the members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice Ministry at the Sangsad Bhaban.

Mirza Golam Hafiz, who is the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, apprised Remington of the constitution function and of the committee.

Remington gave brief outline of the US house judiciary sub-committee on courts, intellectual property and administration of justice.

## Weather

### Heavy fall likely

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or shower accompanied by gusty or squally wind with a few moderately heavy to heavy fall is likely to occur at many places over the country, during the next 24 hours commencing 6 pm Sunday, reports Meteorological Department.

Heavy rainfall warning: heavy rainfall is likely to occur at a few places over Chittagong and Dhaka division and the regions of Khulna, Kushtia, Patuakhali, Barisal, Pabna and Bogra till Monday morning.

On Sunday the highest temperature recorded at Rangpur was 34.4 degree Celsius while the lowest temperature recorded at Sylhet was 23.6 degree Celsius. The day temperature till Tuesday may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Little change. Outlook for another five days: No marked change. The sun sets today (Monday) at 6.47 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 5.24 am.

The temperature and humidity in some cities and towns of the country on Sunday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Mini	9am	6pm
Dhaka	29.3	25.5	94	85
Chittagong	28.3	24.9	86	98
Khulna	28.4	25.2	96	95
Rajshahi	30.2	25.2	92	93
Cox's Bazar	29.0	25.5	92	92
Sylhet	33.6	23.6	77	90
Tangail	33.0	25.0	98	82
Barisal	28.6	24.3	96	100
Jessore	30.5	25.2	98	98
Iswardi	30.0	25.8	87	89
Rangpur	34.4	26.8	68	73
Feni	28.8	23.8	89	96

# World's rarest turtle faces extinction in Chittagong

by Special Correspondent

The only endemic wildlife species of Bangladesh the Bostami Turtle 'Aspideretes Nigricans' found in a small pond of the Byazid Bostami area of Chittagong city is facing extinction possibly because of the fact that more than 50 per cent of the turtles are affected by a fungal disease.

A three-member team headed by Dr Reza Khan, in charge of Dubai Zoo and former Associate Professor of Zoology of Dhaka University, participated by Nature Conservation Movement President Md Anisuzzaman Khan and field biologist Md Abu Saeed visited the Bostami pond last week. The team estimated the turtle population in the pond to be less than 500.

The team estimated the turtle population in the pond to be less than 500. All the adult specimens were found to be carrying the disease which made the slaty head, neck, throat and both fore legs 'white' like

### 2.5 lakh stranded Pakistanis

Foreign Minister A. S. M. Mostafizur Rahman informed the Jatiya Sangsad Sunday that according to the government estimate, the number of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh was about 2.50,000, reports BSS.

In reply to a question from Shah Mohammed Rafiqul Bari Chowdhury (JP-Sherpur) the minister said Pakistan agreed in principle to take back the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh in response to calls from Bangladesh and international organisations.

He said Pakistan government and the Makka-based international organisation Rabita-Al-Alam Al-Islami signed an agreement in July 1988, to form a trust with an aim to raise funds for repatriating the stranded Pakistanis.

Rahman said no progress, however, had been made in this respect due to the internal political situations in Pakistan.

But, the Foreign Minister said, the present Pakistan government, especially Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has expressed interest to take back the stranded Pakistanis.

leprosy. Only the newborns and young turtles were found to be free from the fungal disease.

Back in 1980 Dr Reza Khan wrote an article in the Hornbill Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society first reporting the existence of the fungal disease among the Bostami turtle. Afterwards between 1984 and 1987, Dr Khan's former student and an Assistant Professor of Zoology of Chittagong University Md Farid Ahsan and his student Md Abu Seed and Nurul Haque con-

ducted research on the Bostami turtle and found the same disease.

As the Bostami 'Kasim' (turtle) is the only endemic species of wildlife of Bangladesh which is found nowhere else in the world, immediate steps are needed to save the species from extinction as the entire population might be wiped out due to the fungal infection followed by some unknown disease, awarding to Dr Khan.

To save it from extinction the experts suggested that Government Forest

Department, Chittagong University, District Administration and other related institutions should intervene in the following way:

All the specimens of the Bostami 'Kasim' should be temporarily removed from the present pond which is to be followed by removing of entire water from the pond. Afterwards a couple of inch of debris from the floor and wall of the pond is to be scraped out and the entire pond bleached to get rid of germs.

All the diseased specimens are to be isolated in a pond away from the existing one. All the unaffected specimens are to be removed from the present pond and house in a research pond which should not be visited by the members of the public other than the research scientists.

Skin sample from the diseased turtles have to be scraped out and tested in a pathological lab at home or abroad and get the germ diagnosed. Then the treatment is to be followed.

During the process of treatment and research a small population of least diseased specimens is to be kept in the pond so that shrine visitors can have a glance at the 'Kasims' and at the same time the shopkeepers may keep selling their items to the visitors, who in turn feed the turtles.

Bathing in the pond and sale of beef and mutton lungs and livers are to be banned. Instead sale of beef and mutton cubes, bread cubes and banana have to be encouraged.



Bostami Turtle Photo : Anisuzzaman Khan

## Monday

- 4.30 Opening announcement Al-Quran
- 4.45 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5.00 Asian Club Cup Football—live telecast
- 5.20 News in Bengali
- 7.00 Telecast of Club Cup Football
- 8.00 News in Bengali
- 8.25 Remaining part of the football match
- 9.00 Tagore songs
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.25 Parliament round-up
- 10.40 Man from UNCLE
- 11.30 Khabar / The news
- 11.45 Closing down.

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- Central Reservation, BPC, Head Office : Phone : 317836
- Tourist Information Centres- BPC Head Office : Phone : 327842, 325155-9
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