

# Dhaka Day by Day

## It's Like Being on the Moon

by Fayza Haq

Mousami Roy has been following the footsteps of a travel writer Bruce Chatwin, who wrote about the Australian aborigines. He went trekking through the Himalayan ranges too and Mousami, at 25, has decided to do just that for a vacation. It is not often that one sees young single Asian women trekking.

"What makes it interesting and exciting is that you are seeing a new place and a new country and also witnessing Sherpa culture. I've been interested in Sherpa culture for some time. The other aspect is the thrill of climbing and getting to the summit," the enterprising adventurer commented.

Was she afraid at any point, trekking the heights? She was not afraid because she did not climb with ice picks. "It was simple trekking," she explained in a self-effacing manner. She trekked around the Everest region for a month.

Apparently there are many ways to trek in Nepal. Mousami (nicknamed Pappu) went alone. "I went as an independent person. The trek I went on had a lot of small villages where you stayed at people's houses who take in lodgers. I haven't actually carried a pack myself. I wanted to be independent. I didn't want a group of people behind me. I had one Sherpa guide for 120 Nepali Rupees, and I paid for his food and lodging," she elaborated.

The food in the Solu-Khumbu region of Nepal consists of a combination of flour, salt, tea, yak meat, potatoes and milk. It involves a lot of carbohydrates but one needs the energy as Mousami insisted.

"You walked about seven hours a day and after you reached a place called Namche Bazar you are not to climb more than 300 metres a day and get acclimatised to the altitude. We would then stop and rest at a village," she elaborated.

The maximum height that she has climbed is 500 metres on a mountain called Kalupatar. This is a hill near the Everest base camp. "On an absolutely clear day, in the morning, during sunrise, you could see the south summit of the Everest. You can see the beginning of a glacier called Khumbu glacier. You are surrounded with ice walls. There are moraines too, which are rock deposits," she explained about her trip.

The trek begins at Kathmandu, you take a bus to Jari and you walk to the summit. This takes 12 days. She spent some time in the Tibetan monasteries and tried to learn a little about Tibetan Buddhism. Trekking is a great way to see a country, Mousami believed. You learn how people live, eat and you learn about their culture. It was such a peaceful experience, she commented.

Apart from the hill people, she mixed with the Kathmandu crowd. She found the city very cosmopolitan. In the sense that you can get food from all over the world at the restaurants.

She did the trekking on a three month vacation from her studies.

Mousami is working on statistical models for the way catalysts work in chemical reaction. She is a PhD Physics student in Boston, USA, and plans to come back to the East if it is possible. "It really depends on where my work takes me — where the research is most interesting — more than money or job or prestige," she informed me.

Commenting on the brain-drain from the Indian subcontinent to the West, Mousami said, "I can't speak for other people but my impression is that they simply stay where the working conditions are better. A lot of people may not want to change the quality of their life. But there are others who have a strong national temperament will come back."

Mousami, who has lived in Calcutta, Delhi, Hong Kong and the Philippines before going to USA, at the age of 18, lives in an apartment with three other friends paying \$320 per month per person. She can maintain the flat as she is not only on a scholarship but has a job as a teaching assistant. "I love teaching. The students are first year college students. There is a main lecturer and I am the tutor," she informed me.

What about her social life? "It is severely restricted. I generally go out of the cities on the weekends to the mountains, or visit friends in New York and Washington — going to concerts and art galleries," she told me.

I was keen to know of her impressions of Dhaka, as this is her first visit here. She has come to visit her ancestral homes in the villages of Bonogram and Batachar. Although her parents live in Manila, and have been away since the Liberation, the entire family was keen to come back, and she places like the Shahid Minar, the Jatiya Smriti-soudha and the Bangla Academy, where they were delighted with the collection of the Tagore songs.

She has managed to see the play "Darpan" within the few weeks that she has been in Dhaka. "I'm not a theatre critic but I found the acting and setting comparable to the experimental productions in the West," Mousami commented.

She was even delighted with the Ramna Park. "It's a stark contrast to the Calcutta parks. I found the streets very clean and good compared to Calcutta, that is," she further commented. Her "mamabari" happens to be in Calcutta, which she has visited often.

The PhD student, who, at the age of eleven, wrote a fan letter to Dr Abdus Salam, has travelled to Paris, California, Nevada, Mexico, the Vermont Mountains and the East Coast, when in USA.

Concluding her experience in Nepal, Mousami remarked: "It's a powerful experience. It looked as if you could have been on the moon."



Mousami Roy: Trekking through Himalayan ranges

### Sample survey conducted

## Biman passengers like 8 Bengali, 4 English dailies

To determine the passengers' liking of national dailies which they read on board, Bangladesh Biman recently made a sample survey on their choice and demand, a press release said Thursday, reports BSS.

In accordance with the priority list of the customers' choice and demand, based on the results of the survey, steps have been taken to provide the first eight Bengali dailies and the first four English dailies on board the Biman flights from the first week of the current month.

Such surveys will also be conducted in future to assess which dailies the passengers would like to read during the Biman flights operating on international and domestic routes.

## Mymensingh MPs discuss local problems with President

Three Members of Parliament from Mymensingh district met the Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, at the President's Secretariat Thursday, reports BSS.

The MPs, Shamsul Huq, Aftab Hossain and Nazrul Islam discussed with the Acting President a number of problems faced by the people of their areas.

They urged the President to pay his personal attention to those problems which include poor financial condition of the educational institutions of the district.

Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed gave them a patient hearing and assured them that he would look into the problems.

## Tk 250 crore German technical, food aid

Germany will provide Bangladesh with Tk 203 crore (Deutsche Mark 99 million) in development assistance during the current fiscal, reports UNB.

In addition, it will provide Tk 31 crore (Deutsche Mark 15 million) for projects under technical cooperation and Tk 16 crore (Deutsche Mark 7.5 million) in food aid, a press release of the FRG Embassy said in Dhaka on Thursday.

The aid commitment came at a three-day meeting between officials of the two sides in Bonn from July 29 to July 31.

Bangladesh's position as a major recipient of German development assistance was underscored during the meeting reflecting united Germany's undiminished commitment to Third World countries, the press release added.

### BGIC Award

Bangladesh General Insurance Company (BGIC) has introduced 'BGIC Reader-Increase Award' with a view to encouraging reading books, says a press release.

The award with effect from the year 1990, will be given to those readers who will borrow the highest number of books from the libraries in Bangladesh in a year.

For the year 1990, Mrs Jinnat Latif, member of the Dhaka Ladies Club and its library, has been given the award during the annual general meeting of the club on July 30, 1991.

The award is first of its kind in the country.

## Shambhuganj Bridge opens to traffic Aug 18

The Shambhuganj Bridge constructed with the Chinese help and assistance over the river Brahmaputra near Mymensingh town will be opened to traffic on August 18, the Communication Minister, Col (Retd) Ol Ahmed, told the Jatiya Sangsad Thursday evening, reports BSS.

The minister was replying to Shamsul Huq (AL-Mymensingh).

The Awami League member said the delay in the opening of the bridge was causing miseries to the people of Netrokona, Kishoreganj, Sherpur and Jamalpur districts. It was also hampering the movement of different commodities causing price-rise of the essentials.

### Death condoled

BNP Secretary General and Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar Thursday expressed his profound shock at the death of Sheikh Abdul Gani, President of BNP Municipal Unit of Gouripur, reports BSS.

## False marksheets for foreign scholarships detected

The Ministry of Education is likely to ask the education boards to submit the lists of the candidates who scored above 80 per cent and 75 per cent marks in SSC and HSC examinations respectively every year after publication of results, reports UNB.

The step is being taken following reports of submission of false marksheets by the candidates seeking foreign scholarships mostly in undergraduate level.

Every year good number of

scholarships are offered mainly by the East European countries for the Bangladeshi students. Minimum requirement for scholarships in undergraduate level are 75 per cent both in SSC and HSC.

An Education Ministry official said shortage of time compelled them to send the applications to the respective governments without scrutinising the marks submitted by the applicants. "It is embarrassing for us to cancel the names already

sent to the respective governments after finding that some applicants have submitted false marksheets", said the source.

A total of 8 applicants have submitted false marksheets this year out of 52 for undergraduate level scholarships offered by Soviet Union.

The trend of submitting false marksheets is more common in undergraduate level than post graduate level, the official said.

## Rezaul Karim presents credentials

The newly appointed Bangladesh High Commissioner to the United Kingdom M M Rezaul Karim, presented his credentials to Queen Elizabeth on Wednesday, an official source said, reports BSS.

After the ceremony, the Queen received the High Commissioner and his wife in audience. The High Commissioner conveyed to the Queen that greetings and good wishes of Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia which the Queen warmly reciprocated.

Later a reception was hosted in the Bangladesh Chancery which was attended, among others, by the Marshal of the diplomatic corps, Members of Parliament, Deputy Under Secretary of State in the foreign and Commonwealth office, senior government officials and journalists.

## FM cancels visit to Istanbul: Secretary to lead team

Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan leaves Dhaka today to attend the 20th International Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) beginning in Istanbul Saturday, reports UNB.

Officials said Thursday Foreign Secretary will lead the four-member Bangladesh delegation at the 6-day meet, as Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman will not be able to attend the conference in the Turkish city due to pre-occupations at home.

The conference will review the post-war scenario in the Gulf and try to devise a guarantee of security in the region.

It will also discuss socio-political and economic condi-

tions of the Muslim Ummah and will make suggestions to be submitted to the forthcoming OIC summit due in Dakar, Senegal, December next.

The conference will prominently deal with liberation of the occupied territories, establishment of the Palestinian state, Kashmir problem, Afghanistan issue and condition of Muslims in non-Muslim states.

The ICFM is expected to formulate a report on OIC's possible assistance to the rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in the cyclone affected coastal belts of the country.



Firoza Begum's solo musical soiree at Shilpakala Academy Thursday. — Star photo

## Private jute exporters incur Tk 100 cr loss, threaten strike

Private sector jute exporters are planning an indefinite strike beginning shortly for realising their demand for interest-free loan repayment facility and other incentives.

They are demanding that the government facilitate loan repayment through interest-free "segregated account", separating the principal from interests accrued thereupon.

The total overdue principal in the sector is about Tk 40 crore, which has accumulated to more than Tk 130 crore with interest.

Private raw jute traders, brokers and shippers sources said Thursday they were going to start the action programme towards the end of the first week of August, halting raw jute export in the private sector.

Talking to UNB, they said they were willing to pay back the unpaid loans, provided "benefits" are assured by the authorities to help them recoup the financial loss they have suffered due to government's "wrong policies and impractical decisions".

The private sector has incurred a total loss of more than Tk 100 crore over last couple of years, they said.

"About 80 per cent people involved with raw jute export have already left the trade, and more are likely to follow as it has become unprofitable," a leading exporter said.

Bangladesh Pat Sangram Committee (BPS) in early 1990 withdrew its acting pro-

### Obituary

Zainab Banoo (Sanam), wife of late Afzal Hossain Khan, retired 1st Class Magistrate, died of cardiac arrest at PG Hospital Wednesday. She was 68, says a press release.

She left behind her three sons, seven daughters and a host of relations and well-wishers to mourn her death.

She was buried at her family graveyard at Barabari under Dohar upazila.

Her eldest son is Maswood Alam Khan, Manager, Agrani Bank, Press Club Branch.

Funeral will be held today (Friday) at her Gandaria residence.

programme in which they threatened to stop raw jute export, following government assurance to look into the "accumulated problems of the private jute traders".

"But no solution has yet been in sight after 18 months since then due to reluctance of the Finance Ministry," the sources maintained.

Bangladesh suffered a loss of about Tk 30 crore and also lost substantial part of international market when raw jute export was banned by the government in October 1984.

The restriction was, however, lifted 4 months later, but "continued wrong policies since have weakened the trade", BPS sources added.

A new jute season has already started, and if the problems are not sorted out urgently, country's jute trade both in overseas and home market might face another setback, concerned circles feared.

Private sector contributes about 20 per cent in total foreign exchange earnings from raw jute export.

## Tk 20 lakh contraband seized at ZIA

Gold, medicines and clothes worth about Taka 20 lakh were seized by the customs officials at Zia International Airport, on Thursday, customs sources said, reports BSS.

During the scanning of the baggage of a Biman flight coming from Muscat, the members of customs surveillance team detected a suitcase containing gold bars.

The suitcase, marked with a code sign given after detection, remained on the conveyer or belt without any claim as the passengers left.

The customs personnel in presence of their Additional Collector GHM Hafizur Rahman and representatives of other agencies broke open the suitcase and found 18 gold bars each weighing 10 tola, the sources said. Another 22 tola gold was seized from a passenger who landed with a Pakistani passport. Besides, medicines and Pakistani clothes were seized from other passengers of a PIA flight.

## Diploma nurses call on Khaleda

A delegation of Diploma Nurses Association Thursday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her secretariat office, reports BSS.

During the meeting, they apprised her of their profession and drew her attention to some problems.

They pointed out that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had given due status to their profession and many of their problems got sympathetic consideration of President Zia.

The Prime Minister gave them a patient hearing and said that all their genuine grievances would be considered sympathetically.

She described the profession as very dignified and respectable and said people engaged in other professions should follow the self-less services of the nurses.

## Teachers urged to motivate students to end campus violence

Prof M Asadur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) has urged the teachers irrespective of differences in opinions and ideologies to motivate the students to end terrorism in the university campus, reports BSS.

The Vice-Chancellor was addressing the teachers of BAU at the Shilpakaraya Zainul Abedin auditorium in Dhaka Tuesday to apprise them of the latest developments on campus situation on the eve of the opening of the university classes from Aug 3.

Prof Rahman said it was urgently needed to consolidate the wills and strength of the teaching community for the restoration and maintenance of a favourable atmosphere for the pursuit of knowledge and free thinking in the university.

He further said that the university teachers were required to play the pioneering role effectively in facing the terrorist activities in the campus.

"The teachers will have to set an ideal before the nation by launching and strengthening

## RCC starts sapling plantation

RAJSHAHI, Aug 1: A month long sapling plantation programme organised by Rajshahi City Corporation was formally inaugurated today by its Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu at Kadirganj graveyard, an official handout said, reports BSS.

The saplings are being planted at the different graveyards and road sides to beautify the city areas.

Over thirty thousand saplings of mango, jackfruit, black berry, shishu mehganj etc will be planted under the programme.

## Proper training for industrial workers stressed

State Minister for Labour and Manpower Rafiqul Islam Mia Thursday said that proper training for the industrial workers in a developing country like Bangladesh was very much needed for maintaining good relations between the employees and the employers, reports BSS.

The State Minister was speaking as the chief guest at

the concluding and the certificate awarding ceremony arranged by the Industrial Relations Institute at Tongi.

The function was addressed, among others, by Manzoorul Karim, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Manpower, DAF Chowdhury,

Director of Labour Showkat Hossain, Principal I R I.

The minister said that the present government was committed to the welfare of the workers for the socio-economic development of the country.

## Weather

### Day temperature may rise

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind likely to occur at many places over Chittagong division and at a few places over Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions during the next 24 hours commencing 6 pm Thursday, reports Meteorological Department.

Day temperature likely to rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country. On Thursday the highest temperature recorded at Sathkira was 33.1 degree Celsius while the lowest temperature was 23.8 degree at Feni.

Feni experienced the highest rainfall of 67 mm on Thursday while Chittagong recorded second highest of 55 mm. The third highest of 49.9 mm was reported from Sylhet.

The sun sets on Friday at 6.42 pm and rises on Saturday at 5.28 am.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Little change. Extended outlook for another 5 days: No appreciable change.

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

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.4	27.2	86	88
Chittagong	28.4	26.5	95	95
Rajshahi	33.2	26.4	86	85
Khulna	33.3	27.5	85	89
Co's Bazar	28.5	26.6	92	92
Sylhet	28.0	24.5	93	93
Srimangal	30.8	26.2	85	88
Chandpur	32.7	27.5	84	90
Satkhira	33.7	28.6	82	93
Rangpur	32.0	27.6	92	92
Barsal	32.1	25.5	90	95
Faridpur	32.8	27.1	89	94
Feni	33.3	23.8	85	87

## TV Friday

- Morning session**
- 8.00 Opening announcement, Al Quran, Programme summary
  - 8.10 News in Bangla
  - 8.15 Children's drama series: The Chronicles of Naranya
  - 8.40 Natun Kurti
  - 10.00 News in English
  - 10.05 Film show: MacGyver
  - 11.00 Moner Mukurey: Aymoy
  - 12.05 Closing
- Evening session**
- 3.00 Opening announcement, Al Quran Programme summary
  - 3.15 Recitation from the Tripitak
  - 3.20 Alor Deshant
  - 3.40 Movie of the week
  - 5.20 News in Bangla
  - 5.30 Sports Programme
  - 6.45 Jiban and Projukti
  - 7.05 Malancha
  - 8.00 News in Bangla
  - 8.30 Comedy series: The Cosby show
  - 9.00 World drama
  - 10.00 News in English
  - 10.30 Film: LA Law
  - 11.30 Khabar/The News
  - 11.45 Closing

## Tanbazar in Narayanganj

### Uttara Bank's network

From tomorrow (3rd August '91) Uttara Bank's 194th branch will be open at 16/2 S.M. Maleh Road, Tanbazar, Narayanganj—the commercial nerve centre of the District Headquarter in airconditioned comfort to serve more efficiently the business community of this area.

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