

Dhaka Day by Day

The 'Rolling Stone' from England

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

On a particularly dull day last week as I rack my brains in vain for an idea, I am introduced to someone who could be called the antonym of boredom. Fiona Thompson, a British free lance journalist has come to the Daily Star office bringing with her not only fascinating stories of parachute jumping and climbing high rises, but an exuberance and passion for life that is almost contagious.

Fiona writes for a woman's magazine called CHAT, does shifts on various newspapers such as the Sunday Express and Sunday Mirror and writes news stories and features for national magazines and newspapers.

Her involvement in the world of journalism, however, has not been very long, only about three years. Before completing a post-graduate course in journalism from London College of Printing, Fiona has channelled her more than abundant energy to all sorts of activities. Some of these are teaching English as a foreign language to foreign students in London and Italy, working for British Airways as an air hostess, working in a farm and painting.

This gives me the impression that Fiona is the sort of person who does not like being confined to one place for very long, a hunch that is soon confirmed for I soon realize that Fiona's real passion in life is travelling. Exploring faraway, exotic and not so exotic places and meeting people of different cultures keeps her going and I mean literally.

She spends most of the year travelling and the remaining part working to earn enough money for the next trip. Apart from travelling extensively to Europe, she has visited Africa, the Middle East and most recently, India and Bangladesh.

On her first visit to Bangladesh six years ago, Fiona has worked for the orphanage at Sreepur going back to England to raise money for the orphans by climbing high rise buildings with a rope, a sport known as abseiling.

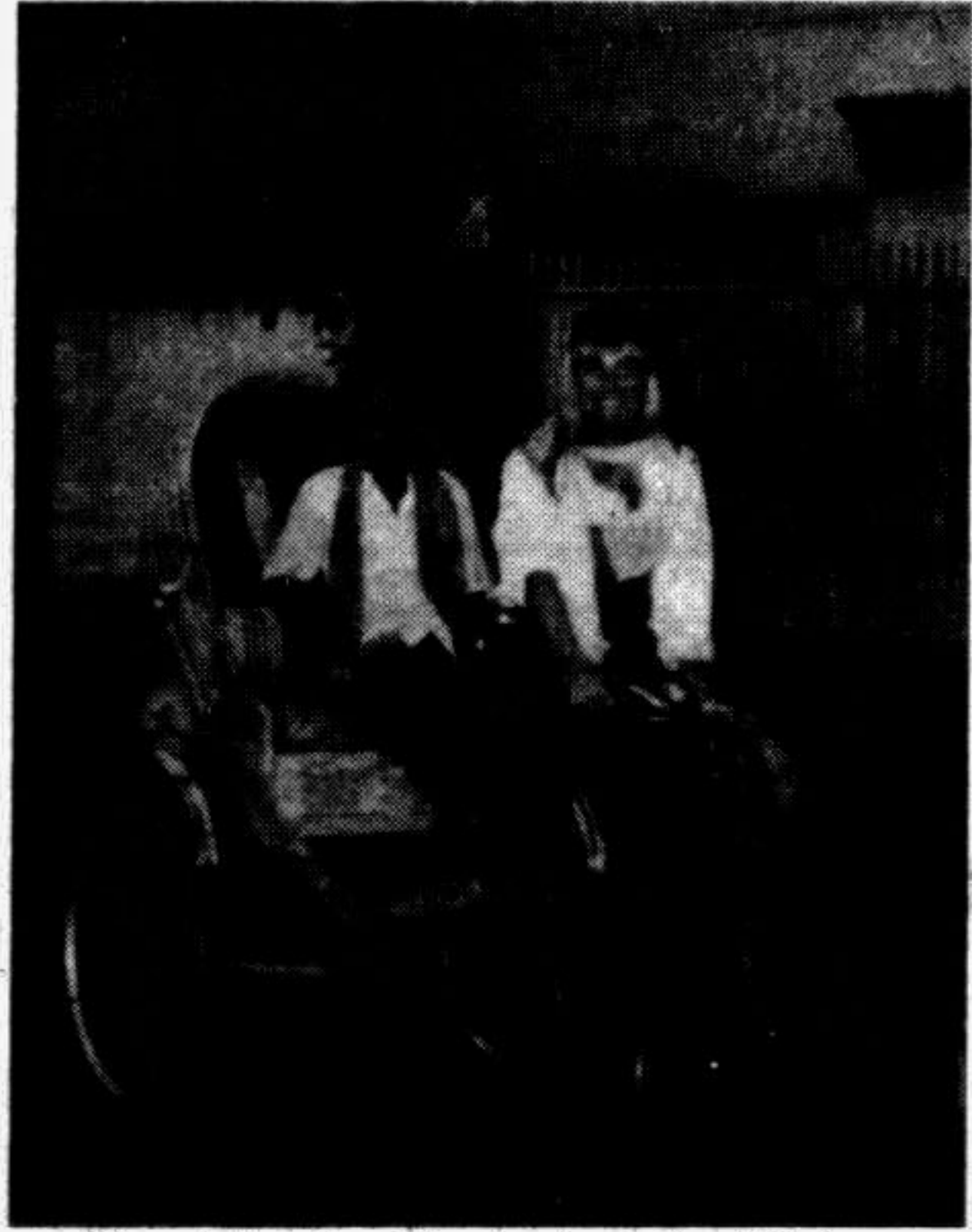
Her visit to India this March, she says, has made her fall in love with the country. Says Fiona, "Calcutta fascinates me in spite of the poverty because it is so culturally rich. And the best part is that everything — life, culture etc is

on the street. There is no attempt to hide anything." On her next visit she plans to meet Mother Theresa, visit the children of lepers and try to get an interview with Satyajit Ray.

When asked about her impression of Bangladesh and its people she says, "What I like about Bangladesh is that they have a good sense of humour and you find it difficult to ignore them. They're so very friendly and warm. When I visited the slum areas in Tikkapara, everyone kept inviting us to come and have tea." During her visit here she has gone to Barisal because she wanted to go on the paddle steamer or 'rocket' which she had heard about from a friend in England. On the boat which turned out to be a crowded launch instead of a paddle steamer she was intrigued with the people who managed to cook right on the boat and the pretty young bride who was too shy to be photographed but came and kissed Fiona's hand and ran. Fiona has also participated in the Hush Run, an event arranged by expatriates to raise funds for charity.

Being a woman journalist and an attractive one at that, has meant often being faced with danger. She recounts an incident when she had arrived at Kuwait pretending to be someone's cousin and was almost kidnapped by the man who had offered her a lift. At another time, again in Kuwait she had taken the bus going on the inland route instead of the coastal route when another lecherous creep sitting behind her tried to touch her. "What did you do?", I ask. She replies, "I pinched his hand with a pin, and it worked!" "You see", she adds ruefully, "I never think of danger. When I think of doing something I just do it."

Life certainly does not stand still for Fiona Thompson. Her next venture, apart from going to 'the city of joy' — Calcutta, is to go to Bombay to visit a friend who lives in an ashram there. When asked if she ever feels tired she says, "I probably do, I just don't realize it. I know I should settle down and have a family but I just find it so difficult to stay in one place".



Fiona takes the driver's place of a rickshaw for the fun of it, in Dhaka.



Members of Hrishis Shilpi Gosthi reciting poem at the conference of Kanthashilan — a cultural organisation — at the auditorium of Public Library on Friday.

—Star photo

DU milad for peaceful beginning of exams

A milad mahfil was held Friday at the Salmullah Hall mosque of Dhaka University praying for a peaceful commencement of the forthcoming Masters' examination, reports UNB.

The examinees for the 1987-88 session of MA, MSC and MSS of Salmullah Hall organised the milad after the Asar prayer as their examinations were earlier shifted five times and now rescheduled to begin on October 24.

The students, fed up with deferring examinations, collected money from themselves and organised the milad to pray for the timely and peaceful holding of their final examinations.

But one round of gunshot was heard at the hall when students were returning from the mosque after the milad. Residents said more than seven rounds of gunshots were heard near the Zahurul Huq hall and the Salmullah Hall during the day.

"We have been held hostages to arms and afraid of being attacked any time", Shaifur Rahman Shaifur, an examinee of the Mass Communication and Journalism Department told UNB after the milad.

Club of retired armed forces officers opens

The first club building of Retired Armed Forces Officers' Welfare Association (RAOWA) was opened Friday evening at VIP Road, Mahakhali in the city, reports BSS.

Lt Gen (Retd) Khwaja Wastuddin, first Chairman of the RAOWA, formed in 1981, opened the newly constructed club building. In a brief speech, he emphasised the need for recreational facilities for retired personnel.

Maj Gen (Retd) Khalilur Rahman, President of the RAOWA, briefly narrated the history and background of the association.

Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Maj Gen (Retd) M. Majedul Huq and Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Nooruddin Khan

Many of the students are disgusted at the continuing violence on the campus which resulted in frequent shifting of examinations.

As one student said the guardians were waiting for the day when their wards would pass out from campus and extend the family a helping hand in these days of hardship.

"We want to see smiling faces of our parents, who are early waiting for our return", he said.

Nearly 5,000 students of Dhaka University, who were supposed to pass out their session in 1987-88, have already lost about three years due to unscheduled closure of the campus.

Housewife abducted

A gang of miscreants raped a pregnant housewife and later abducted her from a local hospital at dagger point in Kushtia Thursday, reports UNB.

Samsun Naher (25) a would-be mother, was violated at the Kushtia railway station on early Thursday when she went out at nature's call.

Naher was travelling from Faridpur and was detained at the station for the night. She was later admitted to the local hospital in a critical condition but soon after the miscreants attacked the hospital and kidnapped her at dagger point. Her husband was with her.

Investigation is going on, police said in Kushtia today.

Health centre to be opened in each ward: DCC Mayor

Food Minister M Shamsul Islam said in Dhaka Friday that the government would do its best to carry out the primary health care programme a success, reports BSS.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the annual convention of the health workers and volunteers organised by World Vision of Bangladesh, an international voluntary assistance organisation, held at the auditorium of Residential Model College, Mohammadpur.

Mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation Mirza Abbas, MP, Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare Scrajul Haque, noted journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury and Executive Director of the World Vision of Bangladesh, James Hilton spoke on the occasion.

About 400 volunteers and members of the neighbourhood health communities working under child survival project of the World Vision attended the function.

The Food Minister said that the BNP government under the leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was committed to improve the condition of people in all respect through undertaking mass oriented programmes.

Islam appreciated the activities of the World Vision of Bangladesh for its significant task for the mothers and children in terms of health and nutrition through the child survival project.

In his speech, the Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation said that one health centre would be opened in each ward of the metropolitan city to provide primary health care services to the child and mothers.

Mirza Abbas urged all concerned to help the City Corporation workers in keeping the city clean and maintaining a healthy environment.

The Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare stressed the need for promoting the extended immunization programme for arresting the child mortality rate.

James Hilton, Executive Director of the World Vision of Bangladesh, in his speech said that they would start one more child survival project in Khulna from next year to address the health problems in slum areas there.

He appreciated the cooperation of the government to the World Vision for carrying out its task of serving the suffering mothers and children.

Dr Kabir Ahmed and Dr Iqbal Anwar also spoke on the occasion.

World Vision has been working in Bangladesh since 1972 in the emergency relief work and rehabilitation, health, education, social and human resources development sectors.

Child health care is one of the priority programmes in Bangladesh.

At present, the World Vision is working in the Ward Nos 12, 13 and 14 of the Dhaka City Corporation involving the people directly with their programme.

Shahabuddin greets King of Lesotho

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed Friday greeted King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho on the occasion of its National Day, reports BSS.

Khaleda greets PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Friday felicitated Major General Elias Pheoana, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho on the occasion of that country's National Day.

What's on today

Kanchi Kanchar Mela

The 35th founding anniversary of the Kendrio Kanchi Kanchar Mela will be observed today (Saturday).

On this occasion, a discussion followed by a cultural function, will be held at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium at 5 pm.

Deputy Leader on the Parliament Prof Badruddoza Choudhury will attend the function as chief guest. Begum Sufia Kamal will chair the function while Poet Shamsur Rahman and Dr Anisuzzaman will deliver the address of welcome.

Besides, Rokonzaman Khan Dada Bhat will also speak on the occasion. Besides, child artists from Dhaka and Sylhet and a number of child artists from abroad will participate in the cultural programme.

Bangla Academy

Bangla Academy has arranged a discussion meeting on the occasion of death anniversary of Ishwarachandra Biddasagar today (Saturday) at 4.30 pm at its auditorium.

Prof Kabir Choudhury will preside over the meeting. Prof Humayun Azad will present the key-note paper while Prof Shawqat Ali and Prof Danial Haq will participate in the discussion.

Sheraton's health, safety plan

The 12th environmental, health and safety week of the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel begins today (Saturday).

Elaborate programmes have been drawn up to make the staff conscious about environmental protection, cause of accident and their preventive measures. The highlights of the day's programmes will be the observance of a non-smoking day throughout the hotel. The day's programme starts with a colourful rally by the staff and breaking of an ashtray by the General Manager John L Eaton and placing of non-smoking signs in the offices.

Besides, training programmes on fire drill, environment protection, first aid, elevator rescue, CPR etc will be conducted.

INTERPOL press briefing

R E Kendall, Secretary General of INTERPOL has convened a press briefing today (Saturday) at 4 pm at the CID auditorium at Malibagh in the city.

. . . . and tomorrow

Bikash Theatre discussion

Bikash Theatre will hold a discussion meeting on the role of the theatre workers in building up a healthy society tomorrow (Sunday) at 4.30 pm at the Central Public Library auditorium in the city.

Special Correspondent of the BSS Gias Kamal Chowdhury will attend the discussion meeting, as chief guest. BPUJ Secretary General Amanullah Kabir and former member of the parliament Giasuddin Kader Choudhury will be the special guests on the occasion.

S. M. Mattiar Rahman Michael, Chairman of Muktidoot, a socio-culture organisation, will be the main speaker. Student leader SM Mamunur Rashid will also speak while Bikash Theatre Chairman Md Shaifur Islam Bulbul will preside over.

The discussion meeting will be followed by staging of the drama 'Harial November -87', written and directed by Jamaluddin Jaman.

Seminar on blindness

The inner-wheel Club of Greater Dhaka will hold a seminar on blindness tomorrow (Sunday) at 5.30 pm at the Sundarban Hotel in the city.

Khaleda visits ailing Aman

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Friday visited Amanullah Aman, MP, who is now under treatment at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister talked to the attending physicians and enquired about the health of the parliament member. She was told that Aman was recovering well.

Health Minister Kamal Ibne Yusuf and Director of the hospital Prof Abu Zafar were present during the visit.

Amanullah Aman was admitted to the hospital early last week following cardiac problem.

TV Saturday

- 5-00 Opening announcement, Al-Quran, Programme summary
- 5-15 Reading from the Triptak
- 5-20 News in Bangla
- 5-30 Khelar Jagat
- 5-55 Documentary film: A Day in the Life of a Woman
- 6-30 Maati-O-Manush
- 7-05 Baushari
- 8-00 News in Bangla
- 9-00 Sangeet Prabaha
- 10-00 News in English
- 10-30 Drama series: Dallas
- 11-30 Khabar/The News
- 11-40 Programme summary for tomorrow, Verses from the Quran, closing announcement
- National Anthem and National Flag
- 11-45 Close down

Weather

Day temperature may rise

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Khulna and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions during the next 24 hours ending 6 pm Saturday, reports UNB.

Met office said day temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

Meanwhile, Jessore experienced the highest 38 mm rainfall during the last 12 hours till 6 pm Friday. Ishurdi had 14 mm, Satkhira 11, Mymensingh 9, Bogra and Khepupara 6 each, Bhola 4, Kutubdia 3, Dinajpur 2 and Cox's Bazar 1 mm shower during the period.

Friday's maximum temperature in Dhaka was 32.6 degree Celsius and the minimum 26.4 degrees. Chudanga recorded the highest temperature 34.2 degree Celsius while Mymensingh, Srimangal, Feni and Rajshahi the lowest 23.5 degrees.

Percentage of humidity was 76 in the morning and 75 in the evening.

Sun sets tomorrow (Saturday) at 5-43 pm and rises on Sunday at 5-52 am.

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