

Dhaka Day by Day

No Fun in the City

by Sabir Mustafa



Only bit of fun they have.

—Star Photo

Young lad picks a lamp-post in his congested neighbourhood (making sure there isn't a dog within a 500-yard radius of it); draws three vertical lines near the bottom with a piece of red brick (chalk costs money, so forget that); draws another line across the top of the three lines, and he's got himself a set of stumps. Takes 22 steps along a straight line and puts a pile of bricks at the end, and he's got himself a bowler's end too. Then he and his friends get down to some serious cricket with a rickety bat and a worn-out tennis ball. That's entertainment in Dhaka, and you better enjoy it.

Few hundred yards away, by the side of the main road where heavy trucks and over-loaded buses speed along spewing poisonous fumes, another group of boys kneel on the dust and throw some marbles around. It's a game. There's skill involved here and it's fun. It's just about the only bit of fun they are likely to have. It also has to be the roadside because there simply isn't anywhere else for them to go.

All over Dhaka, in every neighbourhood, young boys gather in street corners in the late afternoon, chewing peanuts. Volumes are spoken, but nothing said. Youngmen stroll around mainstreets and shopping arcades in the evening. Round and round they go, and get absolutely nowhere. They will do the same the next day, and the day after. Some get fed-up with the routine, others have stopped thinking about it altogether. The more restless among them look for diversions — girls, politics, bit of violence, a little dabble in something harder than tobacco. The local police patrol is just around the corner, and it's only a matter of time.

TINA, to steal an acronym from Margaret Thatcher's book of political jargon, rules supreme here: There is No Alternative. This city of some seven million offers virtually zero option when it comes to making good use of a youngman or girl's free time. Entertainment is spelt with a big E, meaning Extinct.

The city has grown phenomenally, but in a reckless manner: trees have been chopped down, parklands shrunk, playing fields erased, wide roads blasted through the centre, giving

the place more and more an impersonal and lifeless look. Meanwhile, leisure needs of the people-young and old, men and women, employed and unemployed, students or not — have drowned in the booming drums of property development.

Some years back the government started a programme to "beautify" the city — sodium lights, wider roads, painted railings. Money, of course, was never a problem. But the programme forgot all about the people of the city. The human element was not only lacking, it was deemed irrelevant.

But roadshows are getting more and more dangerous places to hang around. Traffic is getting heavier, with every passing bus a potential killer. Neighbourhoods are getting more congested, leaving little space for even your lamp-post cricket.

New slums are taking root, with little space for dwellers' boys and girls to breath in, never mind play and grow up like children should. They are having to reach adulthood even before they know what childhood is. Many of them now go to the movies and holler at the sight of Rubel dishing out mindless violence, just like the grown men do. That's growing up.

But a major portion of the youth have long turned its back on the local cinema industry whose deterioration of standard has outpaced even the growth of Dhaka's population. So, what's left? Lottering, strolling about and getting into trouble. Or stay at home and watch television or video. The idea of providing entertainment, traditional or modern, indigenous or Western, seems to have completely escaped the planners of Dhaka city corporation.

Lack of parks and playing fields hit the young particularly hard, and whatever do exist are fast becoming out of bounds for an ever larger portion of the population. Many people fondly remember Ramna Park, where they used to take their children, or even allow them to go on their own. These days it is a place they themselves avoid at all cost, while children are herded into a cramped little place called Shishu Park. Poor shishus.

Jute sector incurs Tk 1400 cr loss

State Minister for Jute Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan Thursday said the country incurred a loss of Taka 1400 crore in the jute sector in the last ten years, reports BSS.

The State Minister said this while replying to a supplementary question from Mashiur Rahman (BNP-Jhenidah) in the Jatiya Sangsad.

He said Jute used to receive subsidy from the government during the Pakistan times was about 85 per cent of the country's total foreign exchange

then used to come from this sector.

Bhuiyan said the government still gives subsidy although jute now earns 30 to 35 per cent of the country's total foreign exchange.

Replying to another supplementary question, the State Minister said Adamjee Jute Mills, the largest in Asia, suffered a loss of Taka 404 crore and 23 lakh so far. Of the amount, a loss of Taka 350 crore was incurred during the time of the previous government.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- Cooking instruction
- Beverly Hills
- Sold in butcher shops
- Animal enclosure
- Shoemaker's tool
- Arm bone
- Region
- Female ruff
- Location
- Shirley of film
- Attack violently
- Hurricane center
- Petition
- Climbing device
- Enroll for naval

DOWN

- Command to pet
- Ripped newspaper
- Enroll for naval
- Harvested
- Calling 6 Se in debt
- Gratify
- Bivalent
- Causitic mollusk
- Lamb's pen name
- One opposed
- Unit of Chinese currency
- Causitic substance
- Empire of the ...
- Salem's
- Lincoln nickname
- Noise
- Anger
- Offspring
- Golfers' need
- Changes
- Born
- Quandary
- Greet
- Hot summer
- By — of insanity
- Wife of Zeus
- War god
- Break suddenly
- Medicine portion
- Otherwise
- Peruse
- Unrused

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	R	A	T	E	A	H	E	A	D
M	E	A	N	E	R	L	E	N	D
A	L	I	T	R	I	D	E	S	F
L	A	D	P	A	R	E	D	V	I
A	G	A	L	T	A	R	B	O	N
R	E	F	R	A	I	N	M	A	T
L	A	I	C	S	E	R	E		
S	M	A	R	T	S	P	E	E	D
A	U	R	A	S	S	I	T	S	L
I	T	E	T	A	R	N	S	L	I
L	T	C	I	T	E	D	M	O	D
S	E	C	U	R	E	L	E	A	S
R	A	T	E	S	E	N	D	E	D

What's on today . . .

BCU national conference

The 21st national conference of CPB-backed Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) will begin at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) premises of the Dhaka University today (Friday). Poet Shamsur Rahman will inaugurate the two-day conference at 10 in the morning.

A total of 833 representatives of 72 BCU organisational districts and 65 observers will attend the conference.

JCD central body meet

An emergency meeting of the central committee of Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) will be held today (Friday) at 5 pm at the Dhanmondi office of BNP. All JCD central committee members have been requested to attend the meeting.

CU teachers' press conference

General teachers of Chittagong University (CU) will hold a press conference at the National Press Club today (Friday) at 6 pm.

The CU teachers will brief the newsmen about the situation now prevailing on the CU campus.

JSD (Rab) rally against VAT

JSD (Rab) has convened a public gathering in front of the Allwala Building of Motijheel Commercial Area in the city today (Friday) at 5 pm demanding unconditional release of JSD leader ASM Abdur Rab, withdrawal of Value Added Tax (VAT), reduced prices of essentials, cancellation of Special Powers Act and others.

JSD leader Nur Alam Jiku, Mohammad Shahjahan, Prof Humayun Kabir Hru, Zafar Sajjad and Mosharraf Hosen are expected to address the gathering.

Bangabandhu Parishad meeting

A meeting of the executive committee of Bangabandhu Parishad will be held today (Friday) at 5 pm at the city residence of Parishad's chairperson Poet Begum Sufla Kamal.

The Parishad has extended invitations to general secretaries of the Awami League, BKSAL, CPB, NAP, Ganatantri Party and both the factions of Gono Azadi League to attend the meeting.

Retired bank officers' meet

A general meeting of the retired officers of all banks of Bangladesh will be held today (Friday) at 4 pm at Motijheel head office of Sonali Bank.

Retired officers of all kinds of banks have been requested to attend the meeting in time.

Hazrat Omar's death anniversary

Tamaddun Majlis will organise a discussion meeting today (Friday) at 5 pm at the Jatiya Grantha Kendra (National Book Centre) auditorium in observance of the death anniversary of Hazrat Omar Faruk (RA), the second Caliph of Islam.

Principal Dewan Mohammad Azraf will preside over the meeting while Prof Hassan Abdul Qayyum will present a paper on 'Hazrat Omar Faruk (RA) and our society' on the occasion.

Prof Shahed Ali, Sanaulah Noori, Dr Shamsur Ali, Maolana Mohiuddin Khan, Sheikh Ashraf Hossain and others will take part in the discussion.

Rapport workshop on VAT

Rapport Bangladesh Limited holds a one-day workshop on Value Added Tax (VAT) at Hotel Sonargaon today (Friday). Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas will inaugurate the workshop at 9.30 am.

Fourty senior executives from the private and public sector are expected to participate in the workshop.

M Lutfuzzaman, MP, will be the special guest while the inaugural session will be chaired by the Secretary of External Resources Division and Chairman of the National Board of Revenue Nurul Hossain. The welcome address will be delivered by the Rapport Managing Director M Mosharraf Hossain.

Shooting of anti-terrorism short film

Shooting of an anti-terrorism short film named 'Thikana' will be inaugurated today (Friday) at 10 am at the Teacher-Student Centre of Dhaka University. DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Moniruzzaman Miah will open the shooting of the film which will be directed by short story writer Rezanur Rahman on a story composed by himself.

Sponsored by a cultural organisation 'Sarak' the opening programme of the film's shooting will also be addressed by the DU Pro-VC Prof Wakil Ahmed, former DU Pro-VC Prof Emajuddin Ahmed and student leaders.

Khan Bahadur Gold Medal

Khan Bahadur Gold Medal '90 will be distributed among the participants at a ceremonial function to be held at the auditorium of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) at Farmgate in the city today (Friday) at 9 pm.

Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan's memorial meet

A discussion meeting in remembrance of late freedom fighter Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan will be held today (Friday) at 5 pm at the Labour Welfare Centre at Tejgaon in the city.

President of the Federal Union of Journalists (FBUJ) Reazuddin Ahmed, Muktiyoddha Sangsad leader Mahfuzur Rahman and noted intellectuals will address the meeting to be organised by Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan Smriti Sangsad.

Dr Shahidullah's birth anniversary

A discussion meeting on 'Dr Mohammad Shahidullah's teachings and philosophy of life' will be held at Vidyapith auditorium in Mirpur today (Friday) at 4 pm. Dr Mohammad Shahidullah Adarsha Vidyapith arranges the meeting in observance of Shahidullah's 107th birth anniversary.

A recipient of 'Gyantapash Shahidullah Gold Medal' Dr Ashraf Siddiqi will attend the function as chief guest while a Dhaka University teacher Dr Anisuzzaman will be the special guest.

Lions Club Board meeting

A board meeting followed by the first regular monthly meeting for July of the Lions Club of Dhaka Golden will be held today (Friday) at 5.30 pm and 6 pm respectively at the Sonargaon Hotel.

RU Economics Deptt re-union

The re-union of the Economics Department Alumni Association of Rajshahi University will be held today (Friday) at 3.30 pm at the auditorium of National Academy for Educational Management (NEAM) in the city.

. . . and tomorrow

Workshop on capital markets

A five-day workshop on 'Capital markets' will begin tomorrow (Saturday) at the Training Centre of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman will inaugurate the workshop, jointly sponsored by the Bangladesh Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Professionals from the Finance Ministry, various development financial institutions, banks, trade bodies and private sector institutions will participate in the workshop.

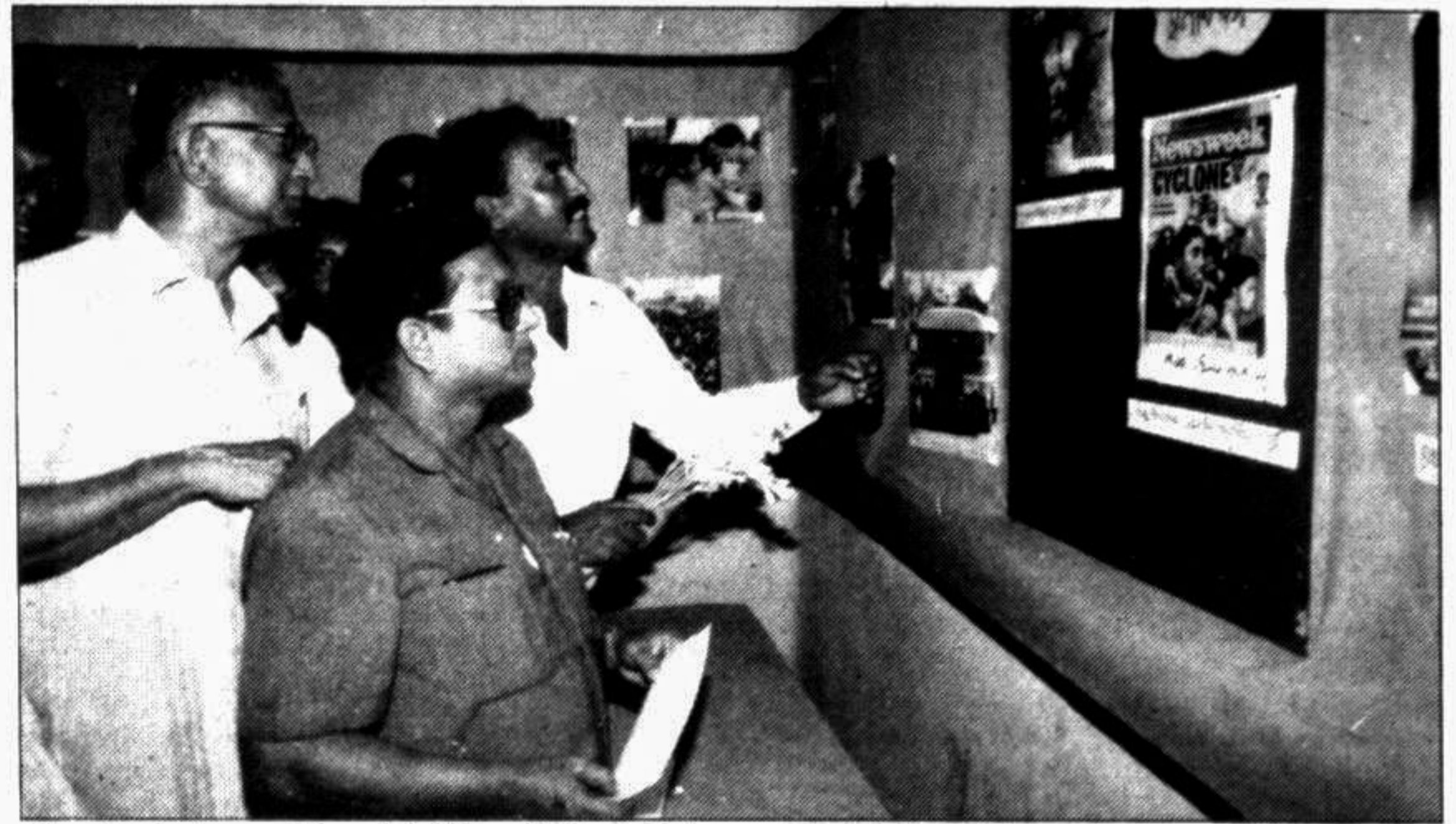
A team of consultants from the Unit Trust of India will conduct the workshop.

Art exhibition of Nizami

The fifth solo exhibition of paintings and ceramics by Shamsul Islam Nizami will be opened tomorrow (Saturday) at 5.30 pm at La Galerie at 54 Kamal Ataturk Avenue (4th floor), Banani, in the city.

A teacher of Art Institute of the Dhaka University, Nizami presents his paintings and ceramics at the exhibition under the title 'Sun and Wheel'.

State Minister for Information Nurul Huda will inaugurate the 14-day exhibition. The exhibition will remain opened for the viewers everyday from 9 am to 8 pm. —NA



A solo photographic exhibition of Pavel Rahman of Associated Press, began on Thursday at the SSMC conference room. Organised by the local Rotaract Club the 4-day exposition was inaugurated by Rotarian Iftekharul Alam.

Call to include Dr. Shahidullah's books as compulsory SSC subjects

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a discussion meeting paid rich tributes to great scholar Dr Muhammad Shahidullah and recalled his contributions in the field of education.

The discussion meeting was organised in observance of the 107th anniversary of his birth Thursday afternoon at Shahidullah College at Bakshibazar.

State Minister for Information Nurul Huda was the chief guest in the meeting where Dr Enamul Huq Khan, President, Jahangirnagar University, Reazuddin Ahmed, President, Bangladesh Federal

Union of Journalists, and Prof M Sariful Islam, Secretary General, College Teachers' Association, were present as special guests.

The meeting was presided over by Dr Shamsuddin Mian.

See also editorial

Chairman of the Governing Body of the College while Chowdhury Sahid Hossain, Principal, delivered address of welcome at the function.

The State Minister in his address said that the present government is determined to restore peaceful academic at-

mosphere in the educational institutions of the country.

He said that the government is now bearing the trauma of an autocratic ruler who crippled the social structure of the country including educational system.

He also said the present BNP government has come from the street with peoples' verdict through a fair election to rule the country democratically and this government is committed to ensure development of the country.

Regarding the campus situation the State Minister said that the people of the country will react positively if the government resorts to steps to combat violence.

"We have every respect for democracy. We had witnessed and still remember the days of an autocratic ruler like Ershad. He further said Dr Muhammad Shahidullah had dreamt of a prosperous country.

Enamul Huq Khan demanded to include Dr Shahidullah's writings in SSC and HSC level as compulsory subjects.

Reazuddin Ahmed said his ideals could be used to restore peace and congenial atmosphere in the educational institutions.

Some of his poems and write-ups were read out at the function by the students of the college.

Khaleda grieved at loss of lives in Chinese flood

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia Wednesday expressed deep shock at the loss of lives and properties due to devastating floods in China, reports BSS.

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