

Dhaka Day by Day

Facelifting the Cubbyhole

by Fayza Haq

Electrifying the house is not a matter that takes place every day. Yet when it does occur your life is thrown into a state of confusion. Last time my brother had some electricians to do the wiring of the house, I could not invite my good friend Lucy and her family even for a small meal. This was although she was carrying parcels for me from overseas, and carted packages again for me to Auslandsland.

Lucy had earlier entertained me endless times with dinner and lunch at Melbourne. It was natural that I should have returned her hospitality. She also got my passport extended without my stirring my tail. I was obviously indebted to her. But do you think I could ask the lady and her husband over even for "daal bhat"? It was out of question because there was cement pieces and open wires all over the place, and my mother was in no mood to stir herself and knock up a meal.

You might ask why couldn't I myself have manipulated at least a casserole in the midst of the turmoil and live wires. I happen to do two jobs at a time, and fail to find energy to cope up with kitchen expertise.

That was not all to that electrification session. My sister-in-law from London was visiting us at that time, and she felt ill at ease with the work in progress, when she wanted to be left alone with her numerous brothers, and their extended families. The work had to be rushed to please her, and no one was cool tempered.

Worse than everything else, my brother took it into his head to employ two sets of electricians. When quite a few of the brick braces were missing from the house we did not know which set of electricians to blame, or which particular servant to hold responsible.

When electrification goes on, furniture have to be moved and sheets put on them. Small items like radios and cassette-players are easily misplaced or simply missing during the grand process of changing the wires. After all is said and done, I am still not used to the new switches. And neither am I completely happy with the way my bedside lamp works.

In Dhaka something like whitewashing and painting the walls follow similar tension and upheaval. Once again your lipsticks, perfumes, hairsprays and nailcutters, along with expensive imported raincoats and bedspreads simply do the disappearing act — while everyone in the house is busy seeing to it that the walls have an adequate colouring.

As for the fuss over the painter — he has to be given cups of tea, biscuits, and expensive medicines from overseas, flown over from UK — just so that the work is complete. The "rangmistri" assistants are equally fussy and must be cajoled and put into good humour, if

you do not want your house painting to be a garish or a careless end product. There are times when even the "rajmistri" has to be entertained while the process of painting is going on. He too has a mind and temper of his own. They must all be mollified and taken care of.

You cannot, for instance, let your temper fly if the water is not hot enough for your bath before going to office, or if the tea is cold, because there are "outsiders" in the house.

It is no great joy either when the "rajmistri" is helping cement one item or another. You have to be so careful as to where you tread, when cementing work is in progress, and you worry about whom you bring in for an evening spell of tea. The family will entertain unwanted guests, who come to do "adda" and beg for extra "saris" or slippers on normal occasions. But if there is work going on in the "gharbkhana", your friends or acquaintances will not be welcomed, when and if they pop in for the occasional tete a tete.

The other day, my family decided to have my cupboard and a set of tables polished. What a hassle ensued! My bathroom entrance was locked up for days, while valued items, like even silver bangles, had to be guarded, lest they took wings. This included money and passport and I could hardly blame the family. Yet I felt peeved when my friend and I had to sit on the verandah, on the ground floor, and have lunch off "luddos" and "nimkins" just because we were not wanted in the premises — not even to eat the usual "bharta" and "korola bhaji".

When the garden has to be cleaned that is yet another nuisance. You must keep a steady surveillance from both the first floor verandah and the garden itself, or the entire favourite bush that provides the "meshta" jam — which is as good as any strawberry confiture — is cleaned off before you can cry "ho".

You have also to be careful that the guavas and coconuts are not mesmerized and made to disappear simply because the servants have been instructed to chop the overgrown grass. We have had many potential thieves enter the house on pretext of cleaning the garden, when no one had invited them inside, in the first place.

I admit the house is more firm and better to look at after the electrician, "polishwalla", "rajmistri" and "rangmistri" have all had a go at the homestead. Yet brightening up your home remains a hassle, which someone as untidy as me cannot quite care to cope up with. I might end up like the unkempt and absent-minded writer who burnt his house down with a carelessly lit candle.



Strike in BUET, classes suspended

By DU Correspondent

The classes of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) remained suspended on Tuesday following a strike called by Chhatra League (S-A).

The strike was called to press home demand for the enhancement of the amount of scholarships given to the students of the university.

During the strike the activists of BCL (S-A) restricted the entrance of vehicles into the Plassey-Bakshibazar link road.

Engineering University Central Students Union (EUCSU) also called for a strike today (Wednesday) on the same demand.

Solarz's aide to lead US Congress team to Dhaka

Four staff members of the House Committee on Foreign Relations of the US Congress will visit Bangladesh August 14-17, says a USIS Press release.

Led by Eric Schwartz, Staff Assistant to Congressman Stephen Solarz, the staff delegation will meet in Dhaka with government and political figures, including members of opposition parties, and with leaders and workers in democratization and human rights, in economic development, and in disaster preparedness and relief.

Upon their return to Washington, the staff delegation, which in addition to Mr Schwartz includes Kenon Nakamura, Andrew Powell, and Lisa Hayes, will report their findings to Congressmen who sit on the committee.

Dr Mafiz files case against UNB

Dr Mafiz Chowdhury, a former minister, has filed a case with the Bangladesh Press Council against the United News of Bangladesh (UNB) for circulating a news item that he had joined the Jatiya Party, a Press Council press release said in Dhaka on Tuesday, reports BSS.

The news item, was published in the Dainik Bangla under the caption "Former Minister Dr Mafiz Chowdhury joins Jatiya Party" on July 19, 1990, the press release said.

Academic Council concerned over DU closure

The members of the Dhaka University Academic Council on Tuesday expressed concern over the closure of the university and urged the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to bring about a congenial atmosphere in the campus and reopen the university as early as possible, reports BSS.

According to a DU Press release the appeal was made at a council meeting held with the Vice Chancellor Prof M Moniruzzaman Miah in the chair.

RU teachers' call not to use students in politics

RAJSHAHI, Aug 13: Rajshahi University teachers have observed that campus violence can be eliminated by greater consensus between the government and the political parties, reports UNB.

In a general meeting of the Rajshahi University Teachers Association (RUTA) Monday night, they said students should not be used by the political parties for their political interest.

Acting President of RUTA, Dr Md Shahjahan presided over the meeting, says a press release.

The teachers believed that readmission of the elderly student leaders was an important cause for the rising trend of violence on the campus.

Meanwhile, 134 teachers of the university in a press statement today demanded immediate repealing of the Indemnity Ordinance Bill terming it as undemocratic and inhuman.

The signatories include Prof Hasan Azizul Haque, Prof Wazed Ali, Prof Shant Kumar Shaha, FR Khan and Mokheer Rahman.

Trawler sinks in Narayanganj, one drowned

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 13: An old man was drowned when a trawler sank in the river Buriganga near here today, reports UNB.

Police said the victim Michir Ali (50) drowned when the trawler with 22 people on board while on its way to Louhajang from Masjid, sank near Baktaboli

Bid to reclaim lost glory of Bangladeshi textiles

by S. Bari

Tourist brochures advertise weaving as one of the great traditions of Bangladesh. Photos of looms and sarees and picturesque weavers crowd postcards and travel books.

But behind these quaint images lies a new world of textiles, where money rolls around the globe, where millions of metres of cloth are bought and sold, and where Bangladesh could earn itself a considerable amount of foreign exchange. Unfortunately, outdated policies, lack of organisation, and a host of

industrialists, if costs can be lowered, buying their textiles here can be profitable for garments manufacturers in different ways.

Transport and other intermediary expenses are avoided, and an on-the-spot checking of the goods is feasible. Certain countries encourage their companies to buy material locally. The US for example, offers a twelve per cent incentive to American companies to buy from Bangladesh.

"Policies," says Didar Hussein of Rahim Textile Mills,

developing the export aspect. "Export is not always everything," says Najib M. Chowdhury of RTM. "An outlet into the local garments industry, for local consumers, is also an area in which the textile sector could play a role."

"The bureaucratic delays here mean that we are not always able to produce as quickly as foreign buyers would like," added Mr. Chowdhury. State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan has said that the government is considering the adoption of new policies on



A stall of Rahim Textiles at the exhibition

other evils plague this potentially rich sector. The first textile exhibition in Bangladesh, held over the past two days, aimed to bring together people interested in the recuperation of the ailing industry.

And a lot of medication it needs. The textile industry, with a yearly loss of Taka 40 to 50 crore, requires new government policies to help it survive. Production costs are high, so that Bangladeshi fabrics are not cost-competitive with imports. Local garments exporters, who are allowed to import fabric, use Bangladeshi material for only two per cent of their requirements. The exhibition was held in order to acquaint those manufacturers with locally available products. Says Mr. Saleh Ahmed of Chand Textiles, "we would like their use to reach ten per cent next year."

Why does the garments industry shun Bangladeshi cloth? "Because it is lower in quality, and because we can't produce in the necessary volume," says one mill owner. Mills in Bangladesh have up to 100 looms each; mills abroad have some 2000.

On the other hand, argue

"Have got to change." Textile mills are not allowed to import grey (unfinished) cloth. Those mills that do obtain permission must export as much as they import. "Given 100,000 metres of cloth from abroad, at 60 cents a metre, we treat it, print it, and increase its value to \$ 1.50, when it is re-exported." But that increase is not taken into consideration by the government. In addition, the mill must export another 100,000 metres of local cloth. "When buyers see that inferior stuff, they shy away."

There is clearly a lot of money to be made if the infrastructure is changed. Joy Silk Mills has a 1.5 crore business importing silk, treating and printing it, and exporting the material to Japan. Minar Textiles made a 2.24 lakh dollar deal with a German buyer at the exhibition. In the ten months that it has been exporting, Rahim Textile Mills has earned Bangladesh \$800,000.

It is the opinion of many in the industry that local markets should be created and expanded side by side with

the issue. The World Bank has reportedly made several recommendations.

Industrialists feel that the process is slow, and many expressed their dissatisfaction, but organizers feel the exhibition was a first step towards a more widespread perception of the potential of textiles.

For the future, organizers would do better to choose a larger space, as the showroom was cramped, and displays from the forty-odd mills generally unimaginative. Exceptions were the silk mills, which had the advantage of sarees and bright weaves. Admittedly, it is difficult to make kitchen towels into a stunning display, and most participants stuck to blandness.

Rahim Textiles proved that draping and lighting can make all the difference: their materials were well-lit and attractively arranged. For idle spectator and sought-after buyer alike, displays are what catch the eye. Hopefully the next exhibition will be brighter and more artistic. After all, the bottom line is selling, whether it be an idea or 50,000 metres of cloth.

Khaleda finds TSS officials absent in office

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia paid a surprise visit to the Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) at Tongi Tuesday, reports BSS.

During the visit the Prime Minister went round different sections of the organisation and saw its working condition.

Begum Zia expressed her dissatisfaction at the overall management of TSS. She was annoyed to see that some of the senior officials were not on duty while some workers were not at their work places.

The Prime Minister had a meeting with the Management of TSS and instructed them to work with dedication and sincerity to turn the organisation a viable one. She also talked with the employees and workers of the organisation and enquired about their welfare.

Later, the Prime Minister addressed a spontaneous gathering of employees and workers of the TSS. She called upon them to do their respective duties properly. She said the workers had to discharge their duties with dedication to protect their organisation.

'High Court has rightly rejected Kader Siddiky's writ petition'

The hearing of Kader Siddiky's appeal petition continued for the third day Tuesday before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, reports BSS.

Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan argued that sufficient materials had been produced before the High Court division to come to a conclusion that the detenu had been convicted by Special Martial Law Court.

The Warrant of Commitment issued by the additional district magistrate, Tangail was not illegal and therefore this will not affect the conviction or the validity of the Warrant of Commitment itself, he argued. Hence, the High Court Division had rightly rejected the writ petition, he submitted.

Hearing in the case resumes today.

Amirul Islam and Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed appeared for the petitioner while Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, Additional Attorney General and Sharifuddin Chaklader, Assistant Attorney General appeared for the state.

Officials can take notes of Sangsad proceedings

By Staff Correspondent

Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas on Monday ruled that officials are eligible to take notes of Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) proceedings relating to their respective ministries.

Replying to a statement from Mujibur Rahman, State Minister for Finance, that he himself was taking notes of general discussion on the budget because none was authorised to take notes from the gallery, the Speaker said the interpretation was not correct.

The State Minister drew the attention of the Speaker to the rules printed on entry passes of the Parliament. The Speaker said officials should take notes of problems raised by MPs that relate to their ministries.

Earlier, the Speaker had drawn the attention of the Minister for Finance that notes of the local and national problems mentioned by MPs should be noted down adequately for giving answers.

Buying price of seed cotton raised to buoy cultivators

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Tuesday announced the government decision to raise the lowest buying price of seed cotton for the coming season to ensure fair price to cotton cultivators, reports BSS.

Begum Zia said the government had increased price of seed cotton from Taka 640 to Taka 700 per maund at purchasing centres in cotton farming areas Taka 655 to Taka 710 at mill gates and Taka 680 to Taka 720 for farmers under contracts.

The Prime Minister made this announcement while addressing a function to mark the inauguration of transplanting high yielding variety cotton at the Central Cotton Research, Training and Seed Multiplication Farm in Sreepur, Gazipur.

Agriculture Minister M Majidul Haq, Agriculture Secretary K M Rabbani and Head of Economic Commission (EC) delegation NA De Joncheere and Cotton Development Board Executive Director Dr Md Ayubur Rahman spoke on the occasion.

State Ministers, local members of parliament, foreign dignitaries and high officials of concerned organisations attended the function.

Begum Zia said the present government was giving special emphasis on cotton cultivation for creating rural employment opportunities and meeting the internal demand of textile and handloom industries.

The Prime Minister said the production oriented programmes in cotton development sector would be encouraged as the present government wanted to do away with import oriented policy in respect of supply of fabrics.

objective of the present government was to make the country self-reliant both in food and textile. She underscored the need for rapid development of newer technology in agriculture sector to achieve this objective.

The Prime Minister said Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman was the first to realise the imperative need for increasing cotton cultivation substantially to achieve self-reliance in textile sector. With this end in view his (Zia's)

government had expanded the programmes of Cotton Development Board and had various bold steps to produce quality and high yielding varieties of cotton in the country, she said adding as a result the cotton production had increased substantially.

The Prime Minister said "now we want to regain our past glory in the textile sector by increasing production and enhancing the quality of our products."



Chhatra Union activists held a peace demonstration in city on Tuesday calling for saving education from the grip of terrorism and anarchy.

JUCSU to promote literary activities

By JU Correspondent

Literary activities get the top priority with a sum of Taka 65 thousand in the budget of JUCSU (Jahangirnagar University Central Students Union) for the 1990-91 fiscal year.

This was disclosed in a meeting Sunday with JUCSU President and Vice-Chancellor Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed in the chair.

Out of Taka 3.18 lakh budget sports received the second priority with a sum of Taka 56 thousand, while Taka 30 thousand has been sanctioned for the JUCSU installation ceremony.

Besides, drama is provided with Taka 36 thousand, social welfare Taka 12 thousand, social recreation Taka 46 thousand, common room Taka 26 thousand and female common room Taka 13 thousand.

Another Taka 32 thousand has been allocated for miscellaneous purpose. JUCSU Vice-President made the welcome address while the General Secretary presented the budget. The JU unit of the Awami

university. The General Secretary of BCL, Abu Hasan Mahmood Shapan spoke on the occasion. The Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed inaugurated the National Plantation Programme '91 in the campus on August 8. Teachers and high officials of the university attended the programme.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Weather forecast valid till 6 pm of Wednesday said rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind likely to occur at many places over Khulna and Chittagong Divisions and at a few places over Dhaka and Rajshahi Divisions. Day temperature likely to remain unchanged. Outlook for subsequent two days: Little change.

Extended outlook for another five days: No marked change.

The temperature and humidity of some cities on Tuesday were:

City	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity	
	max	min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	31.8	27	86	75
Chittagong	32.5	25.5	73	X
Khulna	32.9	27	86	81
Rajshahi	33.6	26.2	89	81
Rangpur	32.9	27.2	78	75
Jessore	33	26.6	X	X
Sylhet	34.8	26.7	81	69
Comilla	X	25.9	71	X