

Dhaka Day by Day

More than Service with a Smile

by Fayza Haq

When young men talk about marrying air-hostesses, telephone operators or personal secretaries, the family loses its appetite for three days in a row. It is really unfair how Dhaka society often looks down at these struggling women, and expect every career woman to be a teacher, doctor or an engineer.

When you look deep into the lives of the personal secretaries or ticketing agents or even the air-hostesses, you realise that many of them have to face endless domestic problems and remain hard working career persons. They are not necessarily the empty-headed flibbertigibbets that people imagine them to be. They are more than pretty smiling faces.

Take Jahanara, for instance, aged 44, who is a personal assistant working from nine to six at one of the largest firms in Dhaka. She reads every possible magazine, newspaper and novel that she can lay her hands on.

She has read European masters through translations, specially French and Russian novelists. She is extremely politically aware and never misses a BBC or VOA news bulletin if she can help it, particularly when there are political upheavals in the city.

She not only reads but tends to a vast garden with a variety of flowers and ferns. She keeps her house sparkling and shiny, despite her limited income and tends to her three children. After work, she cooks and cooks the meal heaven knows where she gets the energy from! Yes, there is a maid to do the washing up and help chop the vegetables. But even when her grown-up sons bring half a dozen friends out of the blue at 10 pm for a feed, Jahanara manages to muster up the necessary meal.

She has but one day off and that she spends in mending, sewing, cooking and dusting. She also tries to utilise the day for serious reading, viewing some plays in town, or visiting her numerous sick relatives. With the help of friends she plans to open up a library and cultural centre where the young and old can come and relax. She believes the existing foreign cultural centres and the numerous 'kendras' are just not enough.

The poor soul is alone in the world if you consider that, she has been a widow for ten years. Before that, her husband, a brilliant personality, wasted his years in teaching mathematics at a Dhaka school, and they lived apart. He took no financial responsibility for the three growing children.

Meanwhile, Jahanara has constantly refused all proposals of marriage. "Wouldn't my children get 'derailed' if I took it into my head to get married? I had my natural desires and inclinations but my sons and my daughter occupied a primary place in my life. I had to think of them first before I could think of a new 'sari' or a matching cheap bangle to go with it."

Shamim is, similarly, yet another person

who has gone into airline ticket issuing work and foreign mission jobs, before she has recently accepted the personal secretary's work. She does not spend her time in flirting or romancing on the telephone, or even in the office, although she has ample opportunities.

She has to keep in mind the family she comes from and that their reputation cannot be mangled. She cooks at home, like Jahanara, and tidies up her room. She has a maid for her two tiny children but she bathes them herself and sees to their homework, although — admittedly — there is a tutor of a sort. Shamim too has time for plants, fine embroidery, exotic cooking and extensive reading.

Shamim is only 30 and has admirers galore. She is obviously a lonely person, but she will have no bar of men who telephone her and try to have a good time over the wire. Her main

objective in life is to get her children settled down. While Jahanara's sons have careers of their own and her daughter is a brilliant student at Jahangirnagar University, Shamim's little ones have barely begun school. The home remains the repository of her thoughts and dreams.

Although with a smile to match Brigitte Bardot's and a figure to vie with any Asian beauty queen, and she dresses so delightfully, despite all her household chores, her home remains her haven. Her coterie of girlfriends are all that she will permit even at her office.

"How do you manage to look so smart a 9 am?" I once asked her.

"When you have all the duties at home?" Shamim informed me how she gets up with an alarm clock at 6 am, has her clothes ready the night before, and has a cup of tea and biscuit in the office for breakfast.

There is yet another hard-working ground hostess called Rahat, that I know of. She has not only helped her parents get her brothers educated, and her beautiful younger sister married to a man from a very distinguished member of the Dhaka society, but has catered to her own two children with perfection.

Rahat could have left her children with her parents in Chittagong, while she worked, based at Dhaka. But she insisted on keeping her daughters with her and seeing to their education herself. She has recently got her elder daughter married, although at a tender age, and has seen to the completion of the education of both her children. She is now scouring the earth for a suitable match for her second child.

I have always known Rahat to be a hard worker. Whenever I have visited her, she has prepared the meals herself, or her daughters have been slaving over the stove. Her house is immaculately clean, and her elder daughter's marriage was a social success, where members of the Dhaka social and political elite were present.



Shamim—a career woman

Traffic anarchy on despite rules awareness drive

By Staff Correspondent

Little has changed in the problem-plagued traffic situation as yet another traffic rule and regulation awareness drive was observed in the city during the last three days ending Wednesday.

According to traffic police over 2,000 traffic rule violation citations were issued during the drive for speeding, reckless driving, excessive emission of exhaust fumes, faulty driving, lane violations, illegal parkings and other violations.

The Deputy Commissioner (Traffic), Nazrul Islam, said that special measures were undertaken to curtail reckless driving, regulate illegal traffic movements and putting extra effort in enforcing the existing rules and regulations. Making booths were set up at seven major intersections in the city to make the public including the pedestrians aware of the rules and regulations, he said. Officials from the traffic po-

lice department also visited some schools to inform the students about traffic rules.

But the traffic situation remains unchanged in the city. The common peak-hour traffic jams at key intersections still exist. Reckless driving and blatant disregard of traffic rules may have decreased temporarily but the causes of the problems remains, observers pointed out.

Problems of having both the slow moving and fast moving vehicles plying the same roads, remain as the numbers of both are increasing. According to the traffic police department there are about 88,000 licensed rickshaws and a total of about four lakh rickshaws plying the streets of the capital.

Nothing much could be done about the good number of inexperienced drivers and the drivers without a driving licence including those with

fake licences, observers noted. A traffic police source said that the number of vehicles on the city streets declined during the drive, perhaps because of the lack of proper papers of the vehicles and the driver.

The DC (Traffic) noted that the traffic congestion problems are most acute in the Farmgate, New Market, Science Laboratory, Maghbazar, Mouchak, Malibagh, Khilgaon, Baitul Mukarram and the intersection near the PQ Hospital.

As Farmgate is a major junction in the city and has one of the largest bus stands and there are a number of schools and colleges in the area, the traffic congestion problem is the most severe here, he said.

He added that the roads at these intersections need immediate repair and also needs to be broadened at the intersecting points to allow for adequate flow of traffic.

Nothing the limitations of personnel and equipment, the DC (Traffic) said that, although there are previous for 114, there are only 70 traffic sergeants currently in service working in two shifts of 35 each.

Although there are 850 traffic police posts in about 800 km of paved roads in the city, only 240 are being manned at any given time, he added.

Non-cooperation of the members of the public in observing the traffic rules, to some extent, also causes haphazard traffic movement, observers pointed out. Greater public awareness about the traffic rules is needed and both the authorities and other social organisations have an important role to play in this regard they added.

BCU to gherao Home Ministry Aug 27

By DU Correspondent

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) will hold a rally in front of the National Press Club and gherao the Ministry of Home Affairs on August 27 demanding immediate withdrawal of the 'false' cases filed against its leaders and workers.

Meanwhile, Nasiruddoza and Ruhin Hossain Prince, President and General Secretary respectively of the organisation in a statement Wednesday expressed grave concern over the release order of the 'killers' of its worker Agahar and demanded immediate arrest of them.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of a novel 'Gulapi Barude Noor Hossain', written by Shirin Majeed, will be held on tomorrow (Friday) at the Biswa Sahitya Kendra in the city, reports BSS.

HERE and THERE

JAGPA

Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) President Shafiqul Alam Prodhan on Wednesday said that only the true nationalist forces enlightened by the ideals of late Mawana Bhasani can eradicate misrule and other misdemeanours from the society.

He was addressing the second death anniversary of former NAP (Bhasani) Chairman late Motahar Ali Khan. Organised by Bhasani Parishad the meeting was presided over by Parishad Chairperson Mrs Anjuman Akter Khan Majlis.

The JAGPA chief said that it is paradoxical that the parliament passed 12th Amendment Bill to revert democratic system but the black Special Power Act was in force in the country.

He demanded repeal of all black laws and cancellation of 25-year accord with India.

Freedom Party

Freedom Party on Wednesday brought out a procession in the city and held rally demanding repeal of Special Power Act and other repressive laws.

Vice Chairman of the party Bazul Huda and Chief Staff Coordinator Chowdhury Mohammad Faruk led the procession.

PATC

A month-long computer training course began on Monday at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre at Savar.

Thirteen officials of different institutions were participating in the course.

PATC has already trained 123 officials under such course, a press release of the PATC said.

Jatiya Sramik Party

Jatiya Sramik Party (JSP) on Wednesday expressed concern at the ailment of former President Hussain Mohammad Ershad in jail.

In a statement JSP President Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and General Secretary MA Gafur demanded his immediate release for better treatment.

Communist League

United Communist League on Wednesday protested the interference of imperialist America and some other capitalist country at the current change over in Soviet Union.

General Secretary of the party Comrade Bimal Biswas said that the people of Soviet Union were struggling to keep their preferable socialist system and they themselves would determine their future.

Hordeo Glass Factory opens

Hordeo Glass Factory, an institution of Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust, was inaugurated on Wednesday at Board Bazar, Gazipur after shifting from Dhaka.

Communication Minister Colonel (Retd) Oli Ahmed was present as the chief guest at the inaugural function which was presided over by Managing Director of the institution, Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Joydul Abedin. State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof Abdul Mannan and Defence Secretary Anisur Rahman were present at the function.

Telecom Employees Union

Bangladesh Telecommunication Workers-Employees Union would go for movement if the government does not fulfill its four point demands immediately.

President of the union Feroz Mian and Secretary General Kazi Kamal Uddin at a press conference on Wednesday said that special allowances with the new pay scales should be given as T & T is a profiting sector.

Other demands of the union include: Stopping of harassing transfer, removal of master role chairman, and imposition of ban on BATESKOP activities as collective bargaining agents.

They, however, did not specify the time or date of launching movement. Other union leaders present at the conference were Abdul Quayum, Hafizur Rahman, Ahmed Karim, Abdul Majid, Abdul Hye and Manjur Ahmed.

Compiled by ASZ

What's on today...

Biman cargo export centre

The State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan will open Biman's new cargo export centre at Zia International Airport today (Thursday) at 9 am.

Water Transport Owners Assoc

Inland Water Transport Owners Association has convened a press conference at the National Press Club today (Thursday) at 5 pm.

The association leaders will explain they were still clinging to their earlier decision to stop indefinitely all kinds of water transports from the mid-night of August 23.

The decision was taken demanding reduction of oil prices at its pre-Gulf War level.

Jatiya Tarun Sangha meet

An emergency meeting of the Jatiya Tarun Sangha executive committee will be held at Tarun Sangha Primary School premise today (Thursday) at 4 pm.

Garments Workers Press Confce

National Garments Workers Federation will hold a press conference at 31/F, Tophkhana Road at 5 pm today (Thursday). The federation will focus on pay structure and other problems of garments workers.

Rotary Club installation

Installation Ceremony of the Rotary Club of Dhaka South will be held at Sheraton Hotel today (Thursday) at 5 pm. Rtn District Governor Prof Jalal U Ahmed will be the Chief Guest at the ceremony.

'Ballot powerful than bullet'

Speakers at a discussion meeting said the country has to go a long way to establish democracy on a strong footing, reports UNB.

They were discussing on



the inaugural show of a documentary film 'Miles to Go' at the auditorium of German Cultural Centre Wednesday evening.

Chaired by Barrister Amrul Islam, the meeting was participated by, among others, Suranjit Sengupta, MP, Prof Strajul Islam Chowdhury, Fayez Ahmed and Dr Golam Rahman. Suranjit Sengupta said the fair election of February 27 had proved that ballot was more powerful than the bullet.

The march towards democracy would take a long time to achieve its goal, he said.

Prof Strajul Islam Chowdhury said problems of discrimination is the main obstacle to democracy.

Fayez Ahmed said the February 27 election had proved that country's so called leftists failed to attain anything politically since their formation in 1921.

People are the real source of power but they are yet to receive their due share, Barrister Amirul Islam observed.

Dr Golam Rahman called for producing people oriented programmes through the mass media, especially film.

The 56 minute film on 5th Parliamentary Election 1991, was produced by the Co-ordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh and was directed by Zakir Hossain Raza.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Rain/thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind likely to occur at many places over Khulna and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions. Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The highest temperature of 36.1 degrees Celsius was recorded at Dinajpur and the lowest of 21.5 degrees at Barisal. The sun sets on Thursday at 6:26 pm and rises on Friday at 5:37 am.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Rainfall activities likely to increase. Extended outlook for another five days: Little change.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	33.5	27.4	81	72
Chittagong	34.0	25.0	90	88
Rajshahi	32.6	23.2	100	84
Khulna	33.2	24.0	96	92
Sylhet	35.1	27.5	67	70
Cox's Bazar	33.5	26.5	76	81
Barisal	33.0	21.5	88	92
Rangpur	—	29.2	77	76
Srimangal	35.3	27.0	72	67

OP-1 visa programme already completed

The OP-1 visa programme of 1990-91 made a total of 20,000 special US visas available worldwide, according to consular officials of the American Embassy in Dhaka, and of that total 4,793 were allotted for Bangladeshis, says a USIS press release.

The officials added, however, that the OP-1 total at the end of the programme was higher for Bangladesh — 6,324 visas — at the end of the special visa programme, because the family size of some of the successful Bangladeshi applicants increased between the time of their application and the date of their visa authorisation.

The officials explained that Bangladeshi 'winners' in the OP-1 programme who had responded in time to consular instructions and presented complete and properly prepared

documents, have been issued visas or have been notified that their visas are ready for issue.

The officials said there will be no further visa numbers beyond the 6,324 already allotted to Bangladeshis, and, he said, the OP-1 visa programme for Bangladeshis therefore has been completed.

Lawyers urge to withdraw upazila courts

The Coordination Council of the Bar Associations on Wednesday observed 'demand day' through holding rallies and bringing out processions for dissolution of the upazila courts, a Supreme Court Bar Association press release said, reports BSS.

A general meeting of the Supreme Court Bar Association was held Wednesday in this connection with its President Dr. Rafiqur Rahman in the chair.

The meeting, in a resolution, called upon the government to withdraw the upazila courts to the district headquarters by October 31. Otherwise, the lawyers of the country will announce more stern and active programme, it said.

The meeting also urged the members of parliament to take necessary measures to repeal the 'Indemnity Act'.

The meeting was followed by a procession which dispersed in front of the Jatiya Press Club, the press release added.

Cooperation sought to curb violence on campus

By BUET Correspondent

Education Minister A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury sought all-out cooperation from all quarters to resist continued violence on the campus.

He was addressing as the chief guest at the installation ceremony of Engineering University Central Students' Union (EUCSU) held at the BUET central auditorium on Wednesday.

In his speech the Minister called upon the students to maintain law and order in the educational institutions. He criticised the students' organisations for serving the interests of certain vested groups and urged them to run their organisations independently.

He appreciated the initiatives launched by the students and teachers of BUET jointly to maintain normalcy and congenial atmosphere on the campus despite continued violence on the educational institutions in the country.

The Chairman of University Grant Commission (UGC) Dr. Shamsul Haque was present at the ceremony as special guest while VC of BUET Dr. Shahjahan in the chair.

EUCSU VP Mir Md. Ruhul Kabir and QS Kazi Fazlul Karim spoke on the occasion.

Diarrhoeal confce Oct 26

International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) plans a three-day conference to disseminate its research findings among health professionals, administrators, policy makers and medical educators, reports UNB.

Magicians' body formed

Magician M Abbas and Magician MA Jalli have been made President and General Secretary of International Brotherhood of Magicians (IBM) a press release said on Wednesday, reports BSS.

The 10-member committee also included Vice President — Sarifullah Sikder, Assistant Secretary — Mohammad Arif, Treasurer — Anne Gomes Office Secretary — Asha Jalli, Members — Syed Mohammad Selim, Najmul Abbas, Farid Uddin and Abdus Sami.