

Dhaka Day by Day

A Garden in the Sky

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

It hardly requires a bird's eye view to see that multi storied buildings are mushrooming towards every nook and cranny of the city. Having a one unit house is neither affordable nor practical anymore. Most people are quite content in living in a functional flat with basic amenities. But one thing seems to be missing — a garden. We all wish for a little bit of greenery, the fragrance of flowers to give ourselves the illusion that we are still somehow in touch with nature. As for those with a special talent

for gardening, this illusion can be carried quite far. Sky high in fact! Roof top gardening has become quite a phenomenon in the city especially in congested areas like Muhammadpur, Mouchak, Magbazar and Elephant Road. Flowers of every season, plants, creepers, vegetables and even fruit trees are grown right on the terrace.

A visit to Mahenur Begum's garden at the top of the five-storied apartment building she owns in Malibagh, is certainly a novel experience. It has about 150 flower pots and about a hundred other plants and trees. Although the season for roses is almost over at this time of the year, splashes of lemon, peach mauve, magenta and red roses are everywhere. There are from 45 to 50 different varieties of roses, each taken with painstaking care. The larger variety includes 'Double Delight' deliciously coloured cream and shocking pink, a peachy 'Mitrinda' and the exotic 'Black Prince'. There are also miniature flowers which are special for their small size and abundant growth with names like 'Margo Costa', 'Annie Costa' and 'Play Girl'.

The other side of the terrace awaits another surprise. For the first time visitor it is like walking into a miniature grove. Rows and rows of pots or drums holding plants are spread all over. These include different types of mango, lemon, orange, guava and even a small grape vine which bears sweet tasting grapes about twice a year. On the sides are some small spice trees such as cinnamon, cardamom, bay and clove their fragrance intermingling with that of the roses creating a delightful potpourri. Says



Mahenur Begum working in her garden in the sky.

Mahenur Begum with a laugh. "We hardly ever have to go to the market for fruits and vegetables. All we have to do is go upstairs and get whatever we need!"

Having a roof top garden is of course a lot of fun but it also means a lot of work for Mahenur Begum and her family. With a teaching job at a government school, classes at the Teachers Training Institute, a homeopathic clinic to run, and a family to look after, Mahenur Begum has very little time for her real passion — her garden. The only time she can work on it is on weekends and at night with the help of artificial light. Her children help out of course: "Whenever they are free I make them help me in the garden. It keeps them out of trouble," she giggles.

The advantage of having a terrace garden is that the plants get plenty of sun and air. The disadvantage is they are also exposed to the ever changing moods of Mother Nature. During storms the plants suffer the most and even the huge drums get knocked over. Flooding is also a problem when it rains incessantly for days. During these times Mahenur Begum and her family have the added task of going all the way up to upturn the drums and pots, place bamboo sticks for support, manually drain out the excess water and restore the damaged plants the best way they can.

Apart from the usual pruning, clipping, tending etc, Mahenur Begum is also always on the look out for new and unusual plants. She regularly visits nurseries where rare varieties can be obtained. Some of her acquisitions include 'Kalamanchi' a unique lemon used especially in tea, 'Baramashi' mangoes and an exquisite 'Matta' bell. A lot of money is of course spent in maintaining these plants and Mahenur Begum therefore, sells some of them to her friends and relatives. She also plans to make a nursery in a nearby plot she has bought. But selling plants is still just a sideline for Mahenur Begum. And while being a teacher and homeopath are important, gardening will always be — her very first love says the lady with the green fingers!

West Bengal Law Minister meets Shahabuddin

The visiting West Bengal Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Gayyum Mollah Tuesday called chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in Dhaka, reports UNB.

They discussed various aspects of judicial matters with particular reference to the use of Bangla in the judicial field in Bangladesh.

The West Bengal Minister who is leading a four member delegation, later went round different sections of the Bangladesh Supreme Court to see the practical working procedure of the court.

42 free medicare centres set up

A 20-member delegation of the Bangladesh Health and Medical Federation met President Abdul Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban Tuesday, reports BSS.

They apprised the President about their activities including setting up of 42 free medicare centres throughout the country.

They also informed that about 67 voluntary organisations with eight lakh dedicated workers would engage to improve the socio-economic life of the rural masses.

President thanked them for their endeavour in the overall socio-economic development and hoped their all success.

He urged them to serve the distressed and the poor to uphold the spirit of humanity.

Among others, Abdul Aziz Sarker, Mohammad Shahajahan, Rashida Qureshi, Ali Akbar Babul, Dr T K Azad, Dr Abdus Samad, were present.



Stands first in LLB (Hons) exam

Shirin Sharmin Choudhury has stood first class first in the LLB (hons) examinations of 1989 under the Dhaka University, said a press release.

Shirin also obtained the first place in the Humanities Group in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations of 1983 and second place in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations of 1985 from the same group, under the Dhaka Board.

Shirin is the eldest daughter of Nayar Sultana, Head of the Department of Botany, Eden Girls' College, and former CSP late Rafiqullah Choudhury.

TV Wednesday

- Special Session**
- 9:15 am Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary
 - 9:30 am Fifth World Cup Cricket Australia vs South Africa.
- Evening session**
- 5:00 Opening announcement Al-Quran
 - 5:10 Programme summary News in Bangla
 - 5:20 Recitation from the Geeta
 - 5:25 Tarunno
 - 6:00 Sports Programme
 - 7:05 Hijaal Tamal: Folk songs
 - 8:00 News in Bangla
 - 8:30 Sangsad Parikrama
 - 9:00 Film: Macgyver
 - 10:00 News in English
 - 10:30 Shilpa o shahittya
 - 11:30 Khabar/The News
 - 11:45 Thursday's programme summary
 - 11:45 Closing

Textbooks scarcity hampers studies

High school students throughout the country are facing serious problem in the beginning of the new academic session as textbooks are yet to reach the book shops, reports UNB.

Serious scarcity of some essential books of compulsory

subjects are hampering the studies from classes VI to IX, students complained.

Book sellers in the city admitted the scarcity of few textbooks while some others are yet to be printed by the publishers.

When pointed at the exhor-

bitant prices of the books available in the market they said that the publishers were supplying those at much higher prices than fixed.

They further complained that although book sellers are to get 25 per cent commission, they were forced to sell with a marginal profit of 5 per cent.

When contacted a high official of School Textbook Board on condition of anonymity told UNB Tuesday that they were aware of the scarcity of books.

He, however, said, "We have got nothing to do as the Board is hostage in the hands of the publishers."

The Board has got no control on printing and distribution of books — we can only control the quality, he said.

The publishers association is so powerful that they can unseat any officer of the Board at any time," the official said adding the scarcity of books is "artificial" and it was to clear off the old stocks.

Publishers Association through a movement achieved the right to publish the high school textbooks about ten years ago. Board is however, in charge of printing and publishing of primary school textbooks.

A publishers association leader when contacted over telephone, however, denied any scarcity.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Soil Resource Development Institute
Ministry of Land
Agriculture Farm Road, Dhaka-1215

Tender Notice No. 51/91-92

Scaled tenders are invited for supply of (1) Chemical and glass apparatus for Laboratory and (2) Drawing-cum-light tracing table, wooden rack, tube light & bulb, toner, plastic cover, glass pencil, lock and table glass etc. for other sections of Soil Resource Development Institute. Only those firms which import on their own import licences chemicals and glass apparatus made by BDH, England or Mark, Germany from the respective countries, can submit tender for supply of chemical and glass apparatus. Attested copies of LC/Invoice/Import Licence against which imports of chemical and glass apparatus have been made during the past 1 year on own import licence from those countries; should be attached with the tender. Molecular weight formula, specification reagent grade, product number and packing size should be mentioned on each item. The goods should be supplied within one-and-a-half months of issuing Work Order. This condition is not applicable on supply of other goods except chemical and glass apparatus. Tender must be dropped in the tender box kept at the office by 12-00 (twelve) hours on 3-3-92 which will be opened on the same day at 1-30 minutes before the tenders present, Tenderers may submit tenders by post through GPO Box No. 899, if they so like. In that case, however, they must ensure that the tender reaches within the prescribed date and time. Earnest money at the rate two-and-half per cent of the total value quoted in the tender should be deposited in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in favour of Director, Soil Resource Development Institute, Dhaka. Schedule may be collected any day during office hours by depositing Taka 100/= (one hundred) for Schedule No. 1 and Taka 50/= (fifty) for Schedule No. 2 at the Section. No schedule will be sold on the date of opening tender.

DFFP(G) 2502-17/2 Director
G-201

Weather Night temperature may fall

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi division during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Tuesday. Met office says.

Weather will remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country, it added. Night temperature is likely to fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

Met office also said that a westerly low lies over Bihar plain, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and northern part of Bangladesh but the weather will improve during subsequent two days.

Sun sets in Dhaka on Wednesday at 6:00 pm and rises Thursday at 6:24 am.

Temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns on Tuesday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	26.5	16.8	90	34
Chittagong	25.6	15.0	75	58
Rajshahi	26.6	11.7	67	46
Khulna	27.0	14.0	65	59
Barisal	26.5	14.5	94	64
Feni	26.7	13.8	86	59
Cox's Bazar	26.0	16.8	80	74
Srimangal	26.0	11.5	89	57
Mymensingh	26.2	13.8	85	57
Dinajpur	25.8	10.0	56	42
Jessore	27.4	13.5		

'Mechanised agriculture a must to boost production'

Agriculture Minister M Majid-ul Haq Tuesday underscored the need for rapid mechanisation in agriculture sector to boost production and change the status of the farmers, reports UNB.

The present government is determined to build up a strong agro-based economy, he said while speaking as chief guest at a three day workshop on "Agriculture Mechanisation — Its present status and future strategy in Bangladesh" at the BARC auditorium.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) organised the workshop.

Surplus labourers in the agriculture field after mechanisation would be absorbed in agro-based industries, he said.

Referring to the decrease in food production since the

seventies which now stands at 2.2 per cent due to population boom, he said mechanised agriculture was now absolutely necessary.

He said government has been giving tax-free facilities for import of agri-tools and maintaining a free market policy for ensuring their supply to the farmers at reasonable prices.

The minister underlined the need for indigenous development of agri-industry and maintaining its quality.

Giving an outline of the government's policy towards agro-mechanisation he referred to the increased use of tubewells and pumps for irrigation facilities.

More 45,000 shallow tubewells, 1000 deep tubewells, 4500 power pumps, 3,000

force mode pump and 30,000 MOSTI will be installed through out the country for the purpose, he informed.

He said about 15,000 power tillers and 9,000 tractors are now being used under private ownership for tilling lands in the country and added that the need is growing due to the falling trend in the availability of bullocks.

Executive Vice-Chairman of BARC Dr M Sujayet Ullah Chowdhury, Agriculture Secretary KM Rabbani, Director of BARI Dr MA Mazed and Member-Director of BARC Dr AKM Moniruzzaman also spoke on the occasion.

CONGRATULATIONS

To

A. M. Sayem

Wish you all the best in your new school

From:

Ammu, Abbu & only loving Appu Shimul

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Dhaka Sheraton HOTEL

Austrian chamber donates water desalination plants

The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber has donated two mobile water desalination plants for the supply of safe drinking water among the people of flood affected areas, reports UNB.

Austrian Trade Commissioner in Dhaka Hans P Kaufmann Tuesday formally handed over the document papers to State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan at his office.

The plants have been donated to the Relief Ministry in support of its efforts to supply safe drinking water to the people of the country especially in the areas worst affected by floods.

The two desalination plants have a capacity of producing 5,760 litres of fresh water everyday and is also easily transportable.

Obituary

Syed Shamsul Huda, former Managing Director of Eastern Refinery and former President of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board, died in Dhaka Tuesday night of a massive heart attack at his Bakshi Bazar residence. He was 74, reports BSS.

He left behind his wife, a son and five daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

It's new just for you

The Daily Star is pleased to introduce a new column where individuals and organisations can publish Birthday and Anniversary Greetings, Congratulatory and Condolence Messages, Get-Well/Good-Luck Wishes, Birth/Death Announcements, In Memoriam, etc. at nominal charges.

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