

Dhaka Day by Day

Women's Status and Other Issues

by Fayza Haq

Carol Rose, a 31 year old fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs is here to study specific problems of the country. "The Institute is a nonprofit private foundation. It was established in '25 and the purpose of the institute is to increase the understanding of issues and areas of the world where international attention is lacking," Carol explained.

"Each year," Carol elaborated, "they select one or two persons, usually a writer, to spend two to five years in any area of the world. I'm on a two and a half year fellowship. The purpose is to write newsletters about this part of the world and the reports are circulated to select individuals who are considered opinion leaders, and that includes newspapers, magazine editors, politicians in Washington, human rights groups UN missions and academics. The circulation is around 3,000. I'm the first fellow in the Subcontinent since the '60s. This is my first trip to Bangladesh and I'm interested in looking at the status of women and the Rohingyas."

"In general, I'm very impressed to the response to the Rohingya problem. I think Bangladesh is truly generous and wise and I hope they can find a truly lasting solution so that they don't face the same problem in five years. Among the people I spoke to were Kaiser Morshed, Chairman of the BIDS, the representatives of the World Food Programme and CARE, and Malika Rehman of the Centre for Training and Rehabilitation of Destitute Women," Carol continued.

"I think as regards the status of women in Bangladesh there is a lot of room for improvement. However, from what I've seen there's a tremendous amount of very good work underway to assist women by agencies like CARE. It seems that over population is probably the greatest challenge facing Bangladesh. Any solution will probably require a combination of education and distribution of birth control devices and economic reforms particularly pension system to support people in their old age so that they will not need money from their children," Carol elaborated about her opinion of Bangladesh.

Before she started on the fellowship she was a foreign affairs editorial writer for a midwestern newspaper with a circulation of 300,000. "I've also written for 'New York Times,' 'Times of London' and 'Financial Times'," she said.

Discussing journalism in USA Carol said that it was getting more and more commercialised. "There is more local news to please the advertisers and less focus on international news despite the fact that readers are interested in foreign news. Ads are controlled by the news. There are fewer and fewer family owned newspapers and more corporate owned. There are fewer newspapers as big newspapers buy small newspapers and merge them. As a result there is less competition. This hurts the news," she said.

"On the positive side I think technology is bringing the world closer like CNN. In that way

news in places like Bangladesh is reaching people through TV. I also hope that there will be competition against CNN because I think it has an American bias," she added.

Talking about the women journalists in USA Carol remarked, "They are generally very respected but not very well paid. I am doing this research type work because it is an opportunity to travel to parts of the world that I believe is very important and too often neglected by the mainstream of the media. As a journalist I've been to Japan and Middle East but I don't think it will be easy to convince a newspaper to send me to Bangladesh and other places in the Subcontinent specially now with the increase in emphasis on local news at the expense of foreign affairs."

What is the present status of the feminist movement in USA? "The feminist movement is now moving to the next phase. Now there is a debate. On one side there is those who recognise that women want families as well as ca-

reers. And on the other side there are those who are on the vanguard and who continue to be more militant. After all women make only 66 cents to every dollar made by men. Equal Rights Amendments to the Constitution has not been passed. On the positive side, sexual harassment while it continues is now recognised as a problem," Carol commented.

Talking about the position of women in general she said that it is always improving but that there is still a long way to go. She realised that in the Subcontinent it was much more difficult for women to have a career than in US.

Do US journalists have enough freedom under the press freedom and freedom of information acts? "In the US the freedom of the press is the strongest in the world and that includes England. I still think there is too much government secrecy, specially after Reagan, but rarely will the government ban a story. Freedom of speech is fundamental to democracy," Carol informed.

Are there still areas where they face difficulty? "I think the biggest problem is financial as the corporation squeeze the newspapers for profits. There is less money for journalists who want to travel," Carol said.

What was her impression of Bangladesh? "The people on the streets are very gracious and gentle to women as compared to other places in the Subcontinent, Nepal apart. I've been in the Subcontinent for one and a half years so the dirt and grime does not upset me. The only difference is that there are many more people here than in the same area anywhere else," Carol said. She also insisted that she loved the fish and "deal" in Bangladesh.

Carol, who has a master's degree in International Relations from the London School of Economics, is being joined for a fortnight's holiday by her husband Tom Harrington, who is a consultant with the UN and a freelance photographer.



Zonta Int'l team due tomorrow

A five-member Zonta international delegation led by its President Leneen Forde arrives in Dhaka tomorrow (Sunday) on a five day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The delegation will present charters to Zonta 111, Dhaka and Zonta IV, Chittagong.

Besides presentation of charters the team members will attend joint meetings of all the Zonta clubs of Dhaka, visit Korotia project for rural distressed, women and medical centre and free day care centre for under-privileged children at Azampur run by Zonta Club 11.

They will also visit the adult literacy programme for under-privileged women and free clinic for their families, run by Zonta Club 111 and health and child care centre of Zonta Club 1.

Perin Hakim, Mano Mutha Krishna and D Dalal will leave Dhaka for London on April 23.

MEP teachers' training concludes

RAJSHAHI, Apr 17: A week-long training course, organised by Bangladesh Islamic Foundation for the teachers of Mass Education Programme, ended here today at Imam Training Centre, reports BSS.

Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu was present as the chief guest at the concluding session and distributed certificates among the trainees.

Presided over by Director of Imam Training Project Md Abdul Jabbar Chakraborty, the function was addressed by Director General of Bangladesh Islamic Foundation Md Manjurul Haque Khan.

A total of 96 imams from 12 districts participated in the training course.

Addressing the trainees the Mayor said socio-economic uplift of the nation could be achieved through successfully implementing the Mass Education Programme. He said two lakh imams of the country could play their role significantly in this regard.

The Mayor called upon the imams to take part spontaneously in the Mass Education Programme with a view to eradicating the curse of illiteracy from the country and making the nation happy and prosperous.

Chinese team arrives today

A 3-member delegation of Sanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries led by its Secretary General Yuan Gong Sia arrives in Dhaka today (Saturday) on a 3-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The delegation will come in the city at the invitation of Bangladesh-China People's Friendship Association (BCPFA) at the last leg of its 3-nation tour of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

During the visit, the delegation members will meet leaders of the BCPFA and exchange views them on future strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries.

The delegation is expected to meet with high government officials and visit historical places including National Mausoleum at Savar and Sonargaon.

Rabindra, Nazrul Jayanti body meet held

A coordination committee meeting to observe the birth anniversaries of Rabindra Nath Thakur and Kazi Nazrul Islam was held Thursday at the auditorium of Shilpakala Academy with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahannara Begum in the chair, reports BSS.



Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament addressing a discussion on Mujibnagar Day at the Awami League central office at the Bangabandhu Avenue Friday.

Science, technology to get top priority in Open University

The central exhibition and competition of the 15th National Science and Technology Week began at the National Science and Technology Museum premises at Agargaon in the city Friday, reports BSS.

Organised by the Science and Technology Division of the Education Ministry, the four-day exhibition and competition is being participated by about 150 competitors with their innovated projects.

The theme of the Week is "Science and Technology in the Socio-Economic Development."

The main objectives of the Week are to create public awareness about science, create enthusiasm in the minds of the budding scientists for creative activities and encourage innovations using indigenous raw materials.

This year about 35,000 young scientists participated in the district level competi-

tions of the Week which was held in January-February this year. The central competitors topped the lists at the junior and senior group competitions held at the district level.

Inaugurating the exhibition Education Minister Zamrudin Sircar underscored the need for proper culture of science and technology with a view to making the country and the nation self-reliant.

He said to achieve self-reliance people and production-oriented education was a must. This was why the present government had given emphasis on both formal and nonformal system of education, he added.

State Minister for Education Principal M Yunus Khan was the special guest on the occasion. Presided over by the Joint Secretary of the Science and Technology Division Begum Kodeza Azam,

the inaugural function was also addressed by the Member Secretary of the National Science Week Organising Committee Dr Mubarak Ali Akhand and young scientists Mahfuja Parveen Chapal and Faisal Habib Khan Noman.

Referring to open university, the Minister said science and technology education would be given top priority in this university.

Principal Yunus Khan said the observance of National Science and Technology Week would inspire the budding scientists in creative activities and increase their self-confidence by several times.

Begum Kodeza Azam said the observance of National Science Week was introduced during 1977-78 with the inspiration and directives of late President Ziaur Rahman to make the people science oriented and to achieve scientific progress and prosperity of the country.

Two symposia will be held today (Saturday) and on Sunday on "Science and Environment" and "Science and Development" respectively as part of the Science Week activities.

The symposia to be held at the Science Museum, will be participated by eminent scientists and educationists. The symposia are open to all.

The exhibition will remain open to the public from 2.30 pm to 6.30 pm on April 18 and 19 and from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm on April 20.

No plan to cut aid to Dhaka: German envoy

The German Ambassador, Dr Karl-Heinz Scholtyssek Friday described the relationship between his country and Bangladesh as "friendly, excellent and warm," reports BSS.

"We are going to support the young democracy in Bangladesh and the two countries have sympathy and respect for each other," Dr Scholtyssek said while giving a talk on "German-Bangladesh Economic Relation" at the Lions Club of Dhaka Solidarity in the city.

He said that there would be no cut in the level of economic assistance provided by Germany to the developing countries including Bangladesh despite diverting of funds for development of eastern part of Germany and the East European countries.

Dr Scholtyssek said Bangladesh was at present receiving 110 million Deutsche Mark equivalent to Taka 275 crore as development assistance from Germany annually.

Another 40 million DM was also being channeled through various non-governmental organisations.

Besides, he said, German contribution to projects taken under the framework of the European Commission was about 26 per cent.

The German envoy said that the emphasis of development cooperation between the two countries was on population control, development of energy, infrastructure, flood action plan and alleviation of poverty.

Dr Scholtyssek said a German delegation would soon visit Dhaka to conduct a study on promoting export oriented industries and development of private enterprises.

He said Bangladesh products were making a "good inroad" to German market and the balance of trade was favourable to Bangladesh.

In 1990-91, Bangladesh exported goods worth 127 million US dollar to Germany against an import of 110 million US dollar.

Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Dr Maniruzzaman Mia, spoke on "Educational environment in Bangladesh" in the second session of the talks which was presided over by the Club President ATM Rafique.

Tk 11.5 lakh Rotrain aid for Rohingyas

Rotarians attending a regional convention in the city Friday donated Taka 11.5 lakh as relief for the Rohingya refugees who have been sheltered in different camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban, reports BSS.

The Rotarians, responding to an appeal by Rotary International President Rajendra K Saboo, made spontaneous and instant contributions which totalled over 11 lakh.

The contributions were made at the first plenary session of the three-day Rotary conference of cooperation and goodwill held in Dhaka at a local hotel.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman presented a paper titled "Better Preservation of Environment."

The Foreign Minister in his speech mentioned the hardships the Rohingyas were facing. He also mentioned the damage caused to the environment because of the sudden influx of such a huge number of people who were cutting trees and causing other harms to the nature.

Nearly 700 delegates from five countries including Bangladesh are attending the convention which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

No repatriation of Bangladeshis at this moment

Bangladesh is eager to see a mutually acceptable solution to the Libyan problem but adheres to the UN security council's resolution, reports BSS.

Asked to explain Bangladesh's position regarding the UN Security Council's sanction on Libya, a Foreign Office spokesman said here today, "Bangladesh fully respects the Charter of the United Nations."

He said, Bangladesh is abiding by the latest Resolution No 748 in view of its mandatory action.

The spokesman said Bangladesh was at the same time hopeful that there would be efforts by the members of the Arab League and the Security Council in finding out a "mutually acceptable solution to the problem."

A large number of Bangladeshi nationals are employed in Libya and are expected to do their jobs peacefully, he said.

He ruled out the possibility of their repatriation at the moment.



Joan Holmes — global Chief Executive Director of the Hunger Project addressing a press conference at the National Press Club Friday. Also seen in the picture are Shahjahan Kabir, chief, Bangladesh Chapter and Dr John Conrad, Initiative Director of the project.

'Hunger Project' to explore new areas for joint action

By Staff Correspondent

The 'Hunger Project' will explore new areas for joint action for an end to hunger in Bangladesh, the organisation's visiting global Chief Executive Director told a press conference yesterday.

Praising the 'new spirit' that she has seen in Bangladesh during her week-long stay, Joan Holmes said, "It is inspiring to witness the creativity, determination, optimism and solid achievements of the people of Bangladesh."

The Hunger Project is a global non-governmental organisation working to end hunger by the year 2000.

"We're just a group of individuals deeply committed to the humanity," Holmes asserted replying to a question and added "We're not traditional NGO doing traditional development work."

"Ninety per cent of our funds come from private, ordinary individuals."

The project focuses its efforts on what individual human beings must do for all people to have the chance to lead healthy and productive lives, the press conference was told.

Dr John Conrad, the Initiative Director of the

President greets Robert Mugabe

President Abdur Rahman Biswas Friday felicitated Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the republic of Zimbabwe on the occasion of its Independence Day, reports BSS.

In his message, the President conveyed best wishes for Mugabe's good health, happiness and long life and for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Zimbabwe.

Project, Shahjahan Kabir, its Bangladesh chapter chief, were also present.

The Bangladesh chapter is a two-year-old body.

TV Saturday

- 5.00 Opening announcement
- 5.00 Al-Quran
- 5.10 Programme summary
- 5.20 News in Bangla
- 5.20 Recitation from the Tripitak
- 5.30 Sports World
- 6.00 Drama series: Sir Nicholas
- 7.05 Bansharee (Folk songs)
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 Probaha
- 9.00 Ujjiban (Religious programme)
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Drama series: Dallas
- 11.30 Khabar/The News
- 11.40 Sunday's programme summary
- 11.45 Closing

Weather

No change in day temperature

By Staff Correspondent

The rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over the Dhaka division and the regions of Pabna, Bogra, Jessore, Kushtia, Comilla and Sylhet during the next 24 hours till 6 pm Saturday, according to Met office.

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry elsewhere across the country during the same period.

Day temperature is likely to remain mainly unchanged during the period over the country.

The country Friday experienced the highest temperature of 40.2 degree Celsius in Rajshahi and the lowest, 21.0 in Sylhet.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 6:22 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 5:34 am.

The temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns on Friday are:

Cities/Towns	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	36.0	25.0	53	59
Chittagong	32.0	25.0	80	76
Rajshahi	40.2	23.0	67	25
Khulna	36.0	22.5	78	
Cox's Bazar	32.5		77	
Sylhet	33.0	21.0	70	65
Comilla	33.5	24.5	78	78
Barisal	33.6	22.6	75	76
Jessore	38.5			
Rangpur	36.5	21.7	53	36

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