

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Sailing Against the Wind

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



Trygve Bolstad

The scene is of a tranquil silvery blue Meghna against a backdrop of a fading crimson sunset. Shadows of a few 'dongs' (small boats) decorate the river while the silhouette of a thin 'majhee' or boatman singing a soulful ballad adds to the magic. Such a familiar picture has been drawn again and again in our poetry and prose to become an integral part of Bangladesh, its culture, its way of life. Yet with a technological revolution since the mid-1980s the small country boats have been replaced by mechanized vessels with engines and motors. The price of the increased efficiency that the modern boats bring, is that the traditional character of the country boats is fading out. Erik Jansen and Trygve Bolstad, both Norwegians wish to preserve this rich cultural heritage which will eventually become remnants of the past. This wish has been translated in the form of a book on traditional country boats called 'Sailing Against the Wind' written by Jansen and illustrated with Bolstad's photographs. Published by University Press Limited, the book is expected to be out on the market by the first week of July and already 1,000 copies have been sold in advance in Europe.

Jansen's interest in Bangladesh boats started as early as 1976 when he came to this country as a research fellow from Chr Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway, to work for Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). It was while living in Manikganj for a year in a farmer's house that his fascination for small boats grew. At this time the Norwegian government, with the collaboration of the Bangladesh government, had embarked upon a project to give support to the inland water transport sector. Jansen and his colleagues realized that most of this support was only for large, modern, mechanized boats that ran from say, Chittagong to Narayanganj. This meant that the most important river transport, that is the small boats, were being ignored. Jansen and his colleagues put forward proposals to the Norwegian and Bangladesh governments. The result was a pilot project by the two countries, to develop country boats and make them more efficient. It was while the boats were being developed with motors and diesel engines that Jansen and Bolstad realized that the beauty and tradition of these country boats, that had up-till now remained unchanged for hundreds of years, had to be captured in some way. Jansen did this through his pen and Bolstad through his lens.

In 1989 University Press Limited published 'Country Boats of Bangladesh' — a detailed study of these boats by Jansen, Anthony J Dalman, A I F Morten Servé and Nazibor Rahmam. Material from this book was later used for the coffee-table type book 'Sailing Against the Wind'.

Writing the book, says Jansen, was not as difficult as the research was. Jansen and Bolstad went all over Bangladesh, to the Jamuna, Bagha Bari, Noakhali, Narayanganj, Chandpur, Barisal etc sometimes spending nights on the boats to collect material for their book by sharing the lives of the boatmen.

One of the main purposes of the book is to depict a distinct lifestyle that these country boats represent. "For several months every year between one third to half of the land is submerged under water. Millions of people take to boats, not merely to the village market and between villages, but even from house to house. For several months every year the life of Bangladesh becomes a floating world" — says Jansen in his book.

'Sailing Against the Wind' is more than just a coffee-table book with nice pictures. This is because Jansen and Bolstad have probed deeply into the lives of the boat people, their sorrows and difficulties in their struggle to survive. The title itself is symbolic of this struggle against odds and the book has been dedicated to the boatmen of Bangladesh. Details of how traditional boats have been designed for hundreds of years, how they have changed over the years and how they are manoeuvred, are given complete with illustrations and photographs. The book also dwells on the lifestyles of the boat people, how they eat, sleep and bring up children on their boats. Bolstad's photographs are spectacular capturing scenes of everyday life of the boatman — a woman cooking in the boat, a boatman taking two ladies, one in a 'burkha' across the river, a 'panshee' boat carrying goods, its sail torn in places indicating the poverty of the boatmen.

With 'Sailing Against the Wind' Jansen and Bolstad wish to relive capture a fading tradition and project an important sector that has been neglected for so long. The beautiful designs of country boats of Bangladesh may never be reproduced in years to come but books such as this will preserve these treasures forever. One only wonders why a Bengali never thought of writing it.

**BTV**  
Wednesday  
Special Transmission  
on Hajj

2.15 Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary Live telecast from Mecca

2.30 Campus

5.23 Sports programme

5.50 Rules of Kurbani

6.10 Hizal Tamal

7.00 News in Bangla

8.30 Biswa Parikrama

9.05 MacGyver

10.00 News in English

10.30 Mukhomukhi

11.30 Khabar/The news

11.40 Thursday's programme summary

11.45 Closing

**STAR TV**  
WORLD SERVICE TELEVISION

**Wednesday**

00.00 hrs	World News
00:25	World Business Report
00:40	Spotlight English
01:00	News from London
01:25	TBA
02:00	World News
02:25	Whicker's World
03:00	World News
03:25	UN World
04:00	News from London
04:15	Business Matter
05:00	World News
05:15	Panorama
06:00	World News
06:25	News from London
07:00	World News
07:10	World Business Report
07:25	Newswatch
08:00	World News
08:25	Tomorrow's World
09:00	World News
09:25	Newswatch
10:00	World News
10:15	Panorama
10:30	World News
11:00	Crime Ltd
11:25	World News
12:00	The Racing Game
12:15	World News
13:00	Business Morning
13:30	Morning News from London
14:00	World News
16:00	Wagon
16:25	World News
17:00	The Dream Machine
17:05	World News
18:00	World News
18:25	Taking Liberties
19:00	World News
19:10	Assignment
20:00	News from London
20:25	UN World
21:00	World News
21:25	Wagon
22:00	World News
22:25	TBA
23:00	World News
23:15	Panorama

(Please deduct 2 hours from above timings for Bangladesh Standard Time)

**STAR plus**  
Wednesday

00:00 hrs St Elsewhere

01:00 Movie: Tigri & the Pussycat Newhart

03:00 The Bold & The Beautiful

03:30 Donahue

04:00 Santa Barbara

05:00 Attitudes

06:00 Everyday Workout

07:00 Kingdom Adventure

08:00 Animated Classics

09:00 Terrahawks

09:30 Dr Pad Show

10:00 Children's Room

10:30 Jupiter Moon

11:00 Attitudes

12:00 Parent Survival Guide

12:30 Mother's Day

13:00 Santa Barbara

14:00 Donahue

15:00 Eye on Asia

16:00 Makeleine Cooks

16:30 Mac & Muttley

17:00 Adventures on Kythera

17:30 Out of Control

18:00 Jupiter Moon

18:30 Beyond Tomorrow

19:00 Earth Summit

20:00 St Elsewhere

20:50 Hollywood Stars

21:00 Movie: Once Before I Die

22:30 Newhart

23:00 The Bold & The Beautiful

23:30 Fame Fortune & Romance

**Wednesday**

00:00 hrs 120 Minutes

03:00 Music Videos

05:00 The Day in Rock

05:30 Rockumentary: U2

06:00 Awake on the Wild Side

09:00 MTV Power Pack

10:00 MTV's Most Wanted

11:00 Classic MTV

12:00 Awake on the Wild Side

15:00 Music Videos — VJ Danny McGill

18:00 Music Videos

20:00 The Day in Rock

20:30 Rockumentary: U2

21:00 MTV Power Pack

22:00 MTV's Most Wanted

23:00 Classic MTV

**202 detenus to be freed on occasion of Eid-ul-Azha**

The government has ordered release of a total of 202 detenus on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Azha after reviewing their cases, an official handout said in Dhaka Tuesday, reports BSS.

Of them, 101 detenus have been detained under Special Powers Act of 1974 and the rest are under trial prisoners for light offences, the handout added.



SHOPPING SPREE: Rush at city markets with two days left for holy Eid-ul-Azha. —Star photo

## All citizens enjoying equal rights: Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas Tuesday said complete communal harmony was prevailing in Bangladesh and all the citizens were enjoying equal rights, reports BSS.

"There is no discrimination among the people as they are sharing the benefits of country's development and achievements," he said.

The President was talking to a 21-member delegation of the Matua community when they called on him at Bangabhaban in the afternoon. The executive president of Hariguru Matua mission of Orakandi of Gopalganj, Padmanava Thakur, led the delegation.

President Biswas said the people of Bangladesh traditionally believed in communal harmony and fellow feelings for each other and were living in a cordial atmosphere dedicating themselves to the national development.

"All our efforts should be directed towards achieving peace and progress for all within the shortest possible time through materialising the uplift programmes of the government," he said.

He hoped that all people of the country would work together to consolidate the present democratic system and to practise their respective religion freely.

The President referred to various steps of the government for the Hindu community and hoped that they would contribute their mite more in the country's development programmes.

He called upon them to dedicate themselves in the task of nation building activities and ensuring basic needs of the commonman. Earlier, the delegation apprised the president of their problems and he assured to look into them.

Among others, Amitava Thakur, Prem Ranjan Dev, Principal Bibhuti Biswas, and Mrs Anita Basu were present.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Deputy Commissioner  
Gopalganj  
(Local Government Section)

### Appointment Notice

Memo No LG/B-22/91/251(200) Dated: 01-06-92 (18-02-99 BS)  
Self-handwritten applications are invited from permanent residents of Gopalganj district for appointment to the vacant posts of Union Parishad Secretaries of Gopalganj district, subject to the undermentioned terms and conditions.

Name of post and pay scale	Maximum age limit	No of posts	Educational qualification	Last date of submitting the application
Union Parishad Secretary. 800-50-1300-EB-55-1600/- (Revised new scale) and other allowances. Pay and allowances receivable as per Govt order.	30 years (Relaxable up to 32 years for Freedom Fighter candidate)	8 (eight)	Graduation degree	22-6-92 8-3-99 BS

**Terms and Conditions**

- Name, father's name, age, educational qualification, permanent and present address, nationality and other informations must be stated in the application.
- Applicant should submit copies of educational qualification certificate, local Pourashabha/Union Parishad Chairman's certificate as proof of permanent resident in Gopalganj district and other certificates attested by a first class govt officer, with the application.
- Non-refundable Postal Order of Taka 50/- (fifty) in favour of Deputy Commissioner, Gopalganj and 2 copies recent passport size attested photographs should be submitted with the application.
- The application must reach the undersigned by 22-6-92 (8-3-99 BS) within office hours.
- Age of the applicant should be between 18 and 30 years (relaxable up to 32 years in case of Freedom Fighters) as on 1-6-92.
- Candidates should be present before the "Interview Board" with admit card and original certificates for viva voce. No TA or DA is admissible to the candidate for the purpose.

Sd/- Syed Md Nurul Islam  
Deputy Commissioner  
Gopalganj.

DFP(G) 10964-3/6  
G-726

## Weather

### Dry weather to prevail

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over the regions of Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal, Patuakhali and Sylhet and at one or two places over Dhaka and Rajshahi Divisions during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Tuesday.

Dry weather is likely to prevail elsewhere over the country during the period.

On Tuesday Chittagong experienced the highest 42 mm of rain in 12 hours till 6 pm which was followed by Majdicourt 33 mm, Rangamati 24 mm, Kutubdia 13 mm, Sathkira 3 mm and Srimangal 2 mm.

The sun sets today (Wednesday) in Dhaka at 6-46 pm and rises tomorrow (Thursday) at 5-11 am.

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

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius	Humidity in percentage	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	34.6	25.0	75	79
Chittagong	32.6	24.2	98	73
Rajshahi	37.2	25.5	70	61
Khulna	36.0	25.8	75	-
Barisal	33.2	27.0	84	92
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.5	72	75
Sylhet	32.6	20.8	77	73
Rangpur	33.2	23.9	78	57

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