

# Dhaka Day by Day

## A Glimmer of Optimism

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

Going abroad to get a higher education is a secret dream every young Bangladeshi holds in one's heart. Unfortunately, economic and social constraints prevent such dreams from materialising for most people. It is therefore very encouraging when professors from well known universities abroad come to teach a course for a term or two or just give a few lectures on specific subjects. These occasional visits give our students an idea of teaching methods used abroad.

Victor D. Lippitt, a visiting professor had enough credentials to make his Bangladeshi students feel privileged to be in his class. A professor of Economics from the University of California at Riverside, he has undergraduate and graduate degrees from schools as prestigious as Harvard and Yale.

Yet his demeanor was both unassuming and friendly as he talked of his experience of teaching Bangladeshi students at the BIDS (Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies). This was part of an advanced training programme in Economics and Quantitative Techniques, with a duration of 2 weeks, at the end of which certificates were given to the participating students. A total of 6 lectures were delivered by the professor under the titles of "Socialist, economic development in the post Soviet era," "the future of the capitalist world economy," "class structure and surplus use in less developed countries," "China's economic reforms in comparative perspective" and "the future of Socialism." In addition Lippitt also had lectures scheduled at the Centre for Social Studies at Dhaka University.

The main area of discussion Professor Lippitt concentrated on, in the BIDS programme was the political economy of development in a post-Soviet era. One of the most pressing questions said Lippitt, raised by the collapse of the Soviet Union is what implications are there for alternative economic systems. In specific terms, whether the capitalist alternative is the only choice. Lippitt mentioned that an important element to be considered when talking of different economic systems is to see things in terms of class interest, that is, which class is controlling the surplus that each economy generates. Based on this argument Lippitt concluded that the Soviet type economy was a statist rather than socialist economy. Its collapse he added, reflected the internal inefficiencies and contradictions of a centrally planned economy. So, is capitalism the answer? Not quite according to Lippitt. He argued that in the long run a capital world economy cannot be sustained largely due to the rise of contradictions between economic growth and the environment which essentially is a political question. The good news however said the economist, is that over the interim period an economic boom will be forthcoming in the next five years. This period of expanding surplus, Lippitt added, would be a time to address the critical problems facing humankind including problems of economic development in the Third World, deterioration of the environment and social deterioration burden in industrialized countries but are also creeping into the Third World.

This economic boom said Lippitt, will depend on continued expansion of world trade and consensus of GATT (General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs) negotiations. This said the professor, won't begin soon because we are still suffering from the aftermath of foolish policies of the 1980's. Thus for example, the level of debt of the US is too high to sustain vigorous growth for the next several years. But there are strong forces to generate growth not in the US but in the capitalist world in general. In addition, the increasing role of Russia, East Europe and China in the world economy is going to open substantial markets. It is therefore very important for Third World countries to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that will open-up as countries become economically more integrated and there will be a historic shift of manufacture from advanced countries to the Third World countries.

When asked to comment on the Bangladeshi students he had to teach for two weeks Lippitt replied enthusiastically, "I think they are very good students. They have a high level of sophistication in understanding issues. I would have liked them to participate more but for the most part they could express themselves very precisely when raising a question."

Although Professor Lippitt was not too familiar with Bangladesh's economy he said that he would spend some time studying it before leaving for the States. He however, had interesting comments to make on economic activities in this country. "The problem seems to me, he said, is that there is too much rent seeking activity. Rent seeking allows people to have the license to own something and the owner of this license gets income by venting it out, but this income does not come from productive activity," Lippitt then gave an example to show how productivity could be increased by reducing rent seeking. There were, he said about 200,000 rickshaws in Bangladesh each costing about 200 dollars; if each rickshaw puller could become the owner of the rickshaw instead of paying the "mahajan" for its use, then his income would increase by about 40 per cent. "This is excellent", he said, "Moreover the total cost of this project should be about 40 million dollars which is not that high in terms of aid levels."

Professor Lippitt has travelled extensively all over Asia. His travels included a short-term full-bright lectureship in Pakistan, and visits to Malaysia, Singapore and Shenzhen — an economic zone of China. With a graduate degree in Chinese and Economics, Lippitt has had a special interest in land reforms in China — a subject for his diversification in graduate school.

Although not very expansive when asked about his personal life, Lippitt disclosed he had recently remarried and had 6 children with the youngest being 14 and the oldest 28. His interests included reading, travelling, playing bridge, chess and "attending to family matters." He thought that Bangladeshi people were very kind and friendly although he did express his kind disappointment at being constantly followed around the streets by persistent mendicants.



Victor D. Lippitt



PDF held a rally at Purana Paltan crossing yesterday demanding trial of killers of CPB leader Ratan Sen. — Star photo

### 107 lawyers demand Shahrier's reinstatement

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 107 lawyers of the Supreme Court Sunday demanded the reinstatement of Shahrier Kabir to the post of the Executive Editor of the Weekly Bichitra.

They include Barrister Abdul Haque, Barrister Amrul Islam, Advocate Shudangsu Shekhar Haldar, Advocate Gazul Haque, and Advocate Shahara Khatun.

The lawyers said Kabir had been removed from his service for his political beliefs and role in the Ekattarer Ghatak Dalai Nirmul Committee.

### PDF threatens to cripple govt

By Staff Correspondent

The Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF) yesterday warned that it would organise the pro-liberation people to cripple government if immediate action was not taken against the identified terrorists.

The PDF made the warning at a rally held at Purana Paltan crossing in the capital protesting the murder of CPB leader Ratan Sen.

PDF Convenor Pankaj Bhattacharya made an urgent call to the components of former eight-party alliance including Awami League and the five-party combine to group up with various professional and trade union bodies with a view to launching an anti-government movement.

"It's regrettable that the defeated forces of Liberation War are still killing those who won the battle", Bhattacharya said and accused these in power of sheltering the killers.

The PDF leader blamed the Home Minister for instigating the terrorists through his statement in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Addressing the rally Nurul Islam Nahid alleged the government was deliberately indulging in terrorism and backing up the anti-liberation elements. The government acts were encouraging the Jamaat-Shibir clique to kill the freedom fighters, he added.

In this context, he said, he had reasons to believe that the government was involved with the terrorism. Also addressed the rally, Alhaj Abdus Samad, Dilip Barua, Mondruzaman, Habibur Rahman and others. Nani Gopal Saha was in the chair. The rally was followed by a procession which paraded Bangabandhu Avenue and Gulistan areas.

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### Breastfeeding Day observed

CHITTAGONG, Aug 2: A discussion on breastfeeding was held at the office of the civil surgeon here yesterday in observance of World Breastfeeding Day, reports BSS.

Civil Surgeon D R M Abdun Nur presided over the discussion while representatives from national and international voluntary agencies participated.

### Stands first

Sharmeen Rahman stood first in Financial Management at the MBA course system examination of the Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University, says a press release.

She is the eldest daughter of Rafiq-ur Rahman, Additional Secretary, BCIC.

### Limestone, coal mine in Joypurhat should be tapped, says Biswas

A 12-member delegation of the Amra Kaj Bhalobashi, a youth organisation, called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban Sunday, reports BSS.

The delegation, led by Abu Yousuf Mohammad Khalilur Rahmaq MP from Joypurhat, appraised the President of their welfare-oriented programmes.

The programmes include tree-plantation campaign, preventing desertification, opening of eye camps, free medical care to the poor and training facilities to the youths.

While talking to them, President Biswas said development of all the area, including northern part of the country, would be carried out in a planned manner.

He said the limestone and coal mine were the important natural resources lying in Joypurhat and those should be tapped for the country's benefit.

President Biswas called upon the youths to contribute to the nation building activities and build themselves up as law-abiding and disciplined work force.

He said the youth force had to be inspired with work keeping in view the socio-economic condition and not to be guided by more emotions.

He stressed the need for undertaking people oriented voluntary initiatives to supplement the governments' development plans for the nation.

The President also advised them to render the best possible services by acquiring skills in various trades to generate more self-employment opportunities.

They discussed matters of mutual interests. The minister expressed hope that the friendly ties and cooperation between the two countries would be further strengthened.

### Australian HC meets Talukdar

Australian High Commissioner R K Gate called on LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar at his Secretariat office Sunday, reports BSS.

They discussed matters of mutual interests. The minister expressed hope that the friendly ties and cooperation between the two countries would be further strengthened.

### Weather

#### Shower likely

Light to rain or shower is likely at many places over Chittagong and Khulna division and at a few places over Dhaka and Rajshahi division during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Sunday.

Meteorological office forecast day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged during the period. Outlook for subsequent two days: Rainfall activities is likely to increase.

Extended outlook for another five days: Little change. Dhaka, Khulna, Sylhet, Rangamati, Matjdee Court, Barishal, Patuakhali, Khepupara and Jessore experienced rain yesterday. The highest rainfall recorded in Jessore was 46 mm.

The sun sets in Dhaka today (Monday) at 6:40 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 5:29 am.

Temperature and humidity recorded in important cities and towns on Sunday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	31.8	25.6	86	70
Chittagong	33.8	24.2	73	73
Rajshahi	32.4	25.4	83	75
Khulna	31.0	25.7	90	95
Cox's Bazar	32.5	25.0	68	82
Sylhet	32.5	-	93	73
Dinajpur	32.0	26.0	85	77
Jessore	31.6	25.2	-	-
Barishal	31.6	24.8	93	97

**BTV**  
Monday

5:00	Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary
5:10	News in Bangla
5:20	Recitation from the Geeta
6:00	Cartoon: Tom the nasty cat
6:30	Sports programme
7:00	Debate competition
8:00	News in Bangla
8:30	Aprar Shahasha Bernal
9:00	News in English
10:25	Parliament round-up
10:35	Highlights of Olympic Khabar/The news
11:40	Tuesday's Programme summary
11:55	Closing

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	A 310	B 727	B 727	B 727
DEP DAC	23:30	19:30	19:30	19:30
ARR DXB	02:30	23:59	23:59	23:59

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becoming a parent is a joy. Especially the very first time. Months of rejoicing, weeks of preparation, days filled with examples and advice, hours of agonising apprehension. And then the baby. "It's a boy!" Tears of welcome, rush of relief. Now for a whole new list of things to do. But first, a moment to myself. Phew. I think I deserve a Gold Leaf now.

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