

Dhaka Day by Day

Abnormally Normal

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

The Dhaka University has earned the titles of 'battle field', 'war zone', 'den of terrorism' etc making one wonder whatever happened to 'Oxford of the East'. So far this year the death toll due to campus violence has reached five. Guns and gunshots have become part of 'extra curricular activities', sometimes the entire curriculum. This is a place where lectures are interrupted by loud processionists, cocktails exploded to postpone examinations, gunshots exchanged for political clout and where the dreams of thousands of students are constantly frustrated.

Last week, however, there was something different about the university campus. After September 4th's shootout that left two students dead, the university authorities ousted a number of 'mastaans' and terrorists from the residential halls. 'Normalcy', apparently, had been restored.

On the outside DU looked 'normal' enough. In spite of a slight drizzle and the announcement of 'hartal' it was just like any other Thursday. The corridors were filled with students — chatting, laughing, hurrying off to classes or coming back from tutorials. In the common rooms, Madhu's canteen, the classrooms and library it was the same relaxed atmosphere. There was no sign of tension or fear on any of those faces, no trace whatsoever that only days before there were bullets flying all over the place, boring holes into human flesh.

In the wake of this 'abnormal normalcy' how did the students feel? Said Kamal, a second year Management student: "Yes, things have been fairly stable the last few weeks. But anything can happen anytime. It would be naive to think that this will continue forever." Such skepticism is prevalent among the majority of students, accompanied by an apathy that is both disturbing and real. Witnessing violence day after day, students have become so brutalized that nothing seems to shock them anymore. Said Nafisa, an IR student cynically: "We don't know what is really happening. Those who are

dying are almost always connected to some political party or the other. It no longer matters whether they die or not, their deaths are no great loss and their presence on campus no gain. All we are concerned about are session jams, postponed tests and incomplete syllabi."

What about being scared just knowing that at any moment somebody, somewhere will be shot at and that somebody could be you? Almost all the students interviewed maintained that they were so used to seeing violence that they had become immune to fear. When asked why they risked their lives just to come to university, one of them retorted, "So what should we do — not study? This is all we have."

But sometimes danger is too real to ignore. Another woman student, who preferred to remain anonymous, talked about a time when she and fellow students had to take shelter in the common room during a particularly violent shootout. "I was really scared," she said, "because some boys were trying to kick down the door. Later we saw a small boy on the ground with his insides out. It was horrible." She added, however, that after such incidents, things just went on as usual as if nothing had ever happened.

Behind the apathy of students and teachers of DU, are disillusionment and frustration, making these spurts of 'normalcy' quite meaningless. Said a professor of the English department, "The university has not been normal for years. There is no academic atmosphere. We cannot take our classes properly because there is always some sort of trouble. We do our work somehow or the other and then just get out — although we are never sure of being able to do so."

Unfortunately, only days after this visit to DU campus the papers announced violent gun battles between rival factions of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal. Life on campus was back to normal.



Dhaka University: where peace is very transitory. — Star photo

GCO wants fulfilment of demands before PM's campus visit

By DU Correspondent

The Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) Tuesday demanded of the government to meet the 10-point charter of demands of the students before the arrival of Prime Minister at the Dhaka University tomorrow (Thursday).

The GCO brought out a procession and held a rally at the TSC crossing yesterday afternoon to press home their demands.

The Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the invitation of the varsity authorities, will attend an award distribution ceremony at TSC auditorium tomorrow. She as chief guest will distribute medals among teachers, students and researchers for their outstanding performance.

Addressing the rally the GCO leaders said that the government was busy in creating 'black laws' like 'anti-terrorism ordinance' but did not think about the betterment of the students community.

Although Begum Zia is inspiring the students by giving

awards but on the other hand she is trying to send the identified terrorists abroad, GCO leaders said.

The GCO rally was addressed among others by Saifur Rahman Tapan, Obayedur Rahman Chunnun and Aslam Khan.

In a statement yesterday the JSD backed the Chhatra League (B-K) also demanded implementation of the 10-point demand of the students before the award giving ceremony on October 1.

Meanwhile, the university authorities are taking all-out preparation to make the function a success.

The authorities after making necessary repairs painted all the buildings of the TSC. Small shops around the TSC boundary walls have been evicted.

A big pandal has been erected on the lawn of the TSC. A large contingent of police have also been deployed at the TSC area.



Azizur Rahim receiving ESCAP-FEJB award at a function at Press Club yesterday from ESCAP Executive Secretary Rafeuddin Ahmed. Environment Minister Abdullah Al-Noman and Ex-ESCAP Executive Secretary Shah AMS Kibria were present on the occasion. — Star photo

Dhaka to raise Farakka issue at SAARC summit

By Staff Correspondent

Forest and Environment Minister Abdullah al-Noman Tuesday said that Bangladesh would table the Farakka issue for discussion at the forthcoming SAARC summit in Dhaka.

Speaking at a function in the capital, the Minister said the issue will be raised in the summit and the discussion will explore grounds for concretely working to resolve the joint river problems.

He was speaking as chief guest at the ESCAP-FEJB award giving ceremony by the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) at the Jatiya Press Club.

Bangladesh's proposal of regionally tackling the common rivers was included in the agenda 21 of the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.

The Executive Secretary of ESCAP Rafeuddin Ahmed attended the function as the guest of honour and distributed the awards while the special guest former ESCAP Executive Secretary Shah A M S Kibria presented a paper on "Water and Environment". Professor Kazi Zaker Hossain of Dhaka University took part in the discussion.

The Environment Minister said that besides the adverse impact on the country's agriculture, the ecology was also facing a grave crisis because of the diversion created on the upper catchment of the Ganges.

Tops of the Sundari trees

were dying out, salinity was increasing in the south while the northern part of the country was facing desertification, he added.

The Minister lauded the role of the FEJB in creating social awareness on the environmental issues and said that the government was keen on taking its newly formulated environment policy at the grass-root level.

The ESCAP Executive Secretary pointed out that the immediate task of the environmental journalists was to disseminate information on the Rio Summit identifying issues related to Bangladesh.

The environmental journalists could help ensure popular participation in the decision making of the ecological issues, Ahmed said.

SAMS Kibria in his paper suggested strict enforcement of laws to protect the country's ecology and said "We have to take lessons from other countries which had to pay heavily for the negligence in early years of their industrial development."

Kibria identified encroachment of salinity in the southern part of the country that had become a matter of concern on which the future of millions of people depended.

The former-ESCAP Executive Secretary, identified the Farakka issue a high priority for Bangladesh to be resolved without any loss of time.

"A policy of drift and inaction will only worsen matters," he cautioned.

Kibria also warned against pollution of the sub-soil water and suggested an integrated programme for the country's water and environment.

Mahmud Shafiq of Weekly Bichitra, Azizur Rahim Piu of the Dainik Ittefaq and Mizanur Rahman of the Sangram received the ESCAP-FEJB awards for 1991.

Ahmed Nure Alam, Chairman, FEJB, presided over the function while General Secretary Motuiddin Naser gave the welfare address.

Wardle, Matin discuss CHT situation

British Home Office Minister Charles Wardle met Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury here Tuesday and discussed with him the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, reports UNB.

The British Minister particularly mentioned the Logang incident and hoped that the report of Justice Sultan Khan's enquiry on the Logang incident would soon be published.

Besides bilateral matters, the two ministers also discussed the Rohingya refugee situation.

Comprehensive book policy soon

A comprehensive national book policy now under formulation will be announced shortly to restore the interest of publication sector of the country, reports BSS.

This was stated at the seventh Parliamentary Standing Committee meeting on Cultural Affairs Ministry held at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday morning with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan Ara Begum in the chair.

The meeting was informed that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was committed to present the nation an effective book policy for creating a smooth and sound atmosphere in this sector.

An 18-member committee is now at work formulate the policy. Apart from this five working committees were

formed. They have already submitted a part of their reports and have been asked to submit the full reports soon.

The State Minister sought suggestions and opinions from the members of the committee in this regard.

The meeting was told that the expansion and development project of the Nazrul Institute which was undertaken during the 1991-92 financial year at a cost of Taka 2.50 crore is nearing completion. It is expected to start functioning within this year.

Prof Jahan Ara Begum said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was very keen to reach the works of rebel poet Nazrul to the people. She said the government had already chalked out special programmes in this connection.

Members of the committee Amanullah Chowdhury, Rabeka Mahmud, Abu Lais Md Mubin Chowdhury, Paritosh Chakraborty, Sahin Ara Hoque and Rashida Khatun attended the meeting.

A villager from Cox's Bazar Tuesday described here at the capital, the sadistic and brutal act of a Jamaat leader who allegedly killed the former's sister and threatened him to kill.

Addressing a press conference at Tophkana Nirmul Committee office Mohammad Isahak (40) of Dargipata village under Cox's Bazar sadar upazila alleged that local Jamaat leader Salimullah killed his sister Lila (20) who became pregnant when she was a maid servant in Salimullah's house.

Isahak, a day labourer, narrated Salimullah approached to take her as maid servant following the April '91 cyclone when the Jamaat leader went for a relief operation to his village.

On June 9 Salimullah reportedly told her sister to provide her with a job in humanitarian organisation Rabita in Chittagong and left Cox's Bazar by a baby-taxi in the evening.

But on the way near Dulafakir Mazar Salimullah with the help of one of his accomplices Kashem strangled and stabbed to kill her. She had 11 stab injuries when her body was recovered, Isahak said.

All the investigations of the case lodged in Cox's Bazar Sadar Thana, was already completed but Salimullah was not chargesheeted yet, he alleged.

Nirmul Committee leader Lt. Col (retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman and Shaharar Kabir were present at the conference.

When contacted over telephone Jamaat leader Ali Ahmed refused to comment on the matter and asked to contact party Joint Secretary General Mohammad Kamruzzaman who was not available.

BTW

Wednesday

5-00 Opening announcement Al-Quran
5-10 Programme summary
5-15 News in Bangla
5-20 Recitation from the Geeta
5-25 Sports programme
6-30 Moder Garab Moder Asha
7-05 Hijaal Tamal
8-00 News in Bangla
8-30 Nrittyer Talay Taley
9-00 Film: MacGyver
10-00 News in English
10-30 Sharita Shankalpa
11-30 Khabar/The News
11-40 Thursday's programme summary
11-45 Closing

Revenue earning in two months Tk 1102cr

The national revenue earning was Taka 1102 crore in the last two months against the total of Taka 8480 crore for this financial year, reports BSS.

The revenue sector include customs and excise duty, VAT, revised tax, income tax and other taxes.

This was disclosed in the meeting of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Internal Resources Division (IRD) held at the Sangsad Bhaban Tuesday.

Convener of the Sub-Committee State Minister for Establishment Md Nurul Huda presided over the meeting.

The other members Sarder Sakawat Hossain Bakul MP and Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury, MP, IRD Secretary and NBR Chairman of IRD and NBR were present in the meeting.

The meeting discussed threadbare the ways and means for imposition and collection of VAT and other taxes from residential hotels and other business enterprises.

The meeting was informed that the national savings directorate sold out various savings certificates and bonds amounting over 132 crore during last two months while the annual target was fixed at Taka 471 crore 32 lakhs.

The meeting was also informed that NBR had earned about Taka 55 crore by selling judicial and non-judicial stamps in the last two months with an annual target of Taka 299 crore.

Death anniversary

A milad mahfil will be held in observance of the 14th death anniversary of Prof Malik Khuroo Chowdhury at 52F Dhaka University Quarters, Bakshi Bazar at 5 pm on Thursday, says a press release.

Khuroo Chowdhury had joined Dhaka University in 1976 as Professor of Economics Department and was later made Chairman of the Bureau of Economic Research.

HERE and THERE

Jamalpur Samity

Jamalpur Samity, Dhaka at a meeting September 24 formed a special fund for the treatment of ailing classical singer Ustad Fazlul Haque.

The people of Jamalpur have been urged to donate to the fund on savings Account No 9084 of Sonali Bank, Farmgate branch.

JSD (Rab)

The Secretary General of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), ASM Rab Tuesday said terrorism on the campus would not come to an end unless the political parties stop using the student organisations as a means to clinging to power.

He was speaking at a representative meet of Bangladesh Chhatra League. Rab said the student politics must be set on a base free from pressure of the political parties.

The meeting held at Dhaka District Sports Association auditorium was presided over by Chhatra League President Bazlur Rahman.

BCIC, BSES, BSFIC Songram Parishad

The Sammitito Sangram Parishad of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), Bangladesh Steel & Engineering Corporation (BSEC), Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) held a meeting with Wasek-Al-Azad, Chairman, BCIC yesterday.

In the meeting, decision was taken to hold joint meeting of Sammitito Sangram Parishad and the chairmen of the three Corporations on de-nationalisation.

CPB

General Secretary of Bangladesh Communist Party (CPB) Nurul Islam Nahid demanded release of Khulna CPB and Chhatra Union leaders.

In a press release he said that CPB leader Rashiduzzaman at Paikgasa, Chhatra Union leader AKM Beduycen in Khulna city were detained on false charges.

Weather

Temperature may rise

By Staff Correspondent

Light or Moderate rain or shower may occur at many places over Chittagong division and a few places over Khulna, Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions during the next 24 hours commencing 6am today (Wednesday).

The Met office forecasts, day temperature is likely to rise by one to three degree Celsius over the country.

It also forecasts, weather may improve within two days. The maximum temperature, 32.8 degree Celsius, was reported from Khepupara yesterday (Tuesday) and the minimum of 20.5 degree Celsius was reported from Sylhet.

The sun sets today at 5.47 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.51am.

The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Degree Celsius	Humidity in Percentage		
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	26.0	23.6	80	89
Chittagong	31.8	25.0	93	78
Rajshahi	29.5	22.8	88	84
Khulna	29.0	22.2	87	82
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.3	74	77
Sylhet	27.0	20.5	92	91
Bogra	29.8	22.4	91	97
Barisal	30.1	24.0	81	82