

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Dhaka's Missing Public Toilets

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



The streets of Dhaka have a special smell. With the intoxicating odours of garbage and carbon monoxide is the unforgettable lethal scent of ammonia. This is a consequence of thousands of citizens who have the illusion of being in luxurious bathrooms when they are actually out on the streets in the drains, or the bushes. Yet what can they do the poor souls after all when one has to go — one has to go. There seems to be no such thing as a 'public toilet' in this city and if there is most likely one would rather not know about it.

Dhaka has a population of over 12 million people. Even if we assume one public toilet facility for every 20,000 people (an absurdity in itself) then there should be at least 600 of these essential amenities in the city. So where are these elusive toilets which we never see or hear of? A tiny voice says that perhaps they simply do not exist. In fact it further adds, one may have difficulty locating six let alone 600!

But one must not be so cynical. There are rumours of these mystery places hiding in certain corners of the city. There is 'they' say something resembling a public toilet right on Indra Road in Farmgate. The only problem is that the sign that once said 'public toilet' has faded away and is no longer visible so that nobody notices it. Those who do know of it from past experience are a little wary of entering the place that has lost its name fearing something more evil than the odour.

There is another one at Paltan 'mor', no doubt one of the busiest corners of Dhaka. According to one time users this public amenity is not a pretty sight to see and one is better off visiting the drains or the street islands. So much for that.

The Dhaka University bathrooms are nothing much to look at either or smell for that matter. Reliable sources (male students of course) claim that the taps are quite unpredictable with minds of their own. Either they will happily drip all day long leaving the floors slippery and murkier than ever or they will not give even a tear drop no matter how much their heads are twisted. Sometimes these bathrooms are blessed with a rare scattering of a special bleach in which case anyone passing by the corridor will faint with the fume's of the powder. If there is no bleach one

may faint anyway with the fumes of, well you know what.

One question that has not been addressed yet is where do women go? Now this is certainly an intriguing (and no doubt embarrassing) query to be answered. Gausia market and Chadni Chawk would be good places to look, after all these places are practically bursting with female clientele who spend hours on end shopping their wallets out. After a good deal of searching every nook and cranny one may begin to get whiffs of the so called 'ladies toilet'. It is perhaps suffice to say that those brave females who have returned to actually go inside are too traumatised to even speak about it except to adamantly claim that they would rather die than go there again.

As for New Market, admirably, as far as one knows, there is no enough public toilet—men's or women's! This has led to many of our fellow country men to fill up the drains just outside the second gate of the market. In fact this area has actually become an unofficial public men's toilet where in half an hour especially on a rainy day at least twenty men will relieve themselves at exactly the same spot.

This pathetic state of affairs has led many of our country men to let go of their dignity and spray all over the city and our poor country women to suffer in silence, take deep breaths and hope for the best.

The municipal corporation, where the core of this problem lies, has done absolutely nothing since the British period, to ensure such basic amenities. We did not have enough to begin with. Now with the population of Dhaka growing exponentially, the need for more public toilets is a gross understatement. The few that do exist are so dirty and unhygienic that they have actually become a health hazard small spreading diseases and unsavoury odours. Shopping malls, supermarkets and bazaars are places where these facilities are essential. Building them will not only ensure a clearer environment in the city but also create employment. With this of course proper maintenance, must be ensured.

It is a sad fact that after so many years of independence we still do not have these basic civic amenities. When will the City Corporation wake up and smell the—well, ammonia?

Relief materials worth Tk 28 cr allocated for flood victims

In the 12th meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Relief held yesterday at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan it was disclosed that 1680 unions and 15 pourashavas under 215 thanas of 33 districts of the country had so far been affected by the recent flood and the government had allocated relief materials worth Taka 28 crore for the flood affected people, reports BSS.

It underlined the need for strengthening the rehabilitation work in the flood-affected areas throughout the country.

The meeting was informed of the government decision of sanctioning a total of seventy thousand metric tons of wheat comprising 40 thousand metric tons wheat under food for works programme and 20 thousand metric tons of wheat under special test relief programme and ten thousand metric tons for other relief

works in the current financial year.

Sanctioning of foodgrains under food for works programme, test relief programme and thana wise CI sheet distribution for the last financial year were also discussed.

The meeting was further informed that in the financial year of 1992-93 50 thousand metric tons of wheat under test relief programme and one lakh 33 thousand bundles of CI sheets were distributed.

The meeting with State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan in the chair was attended by Md Niamat Ullah, Md Azizur Rahman and Sayed Mohammad Mohshin of BNP Advocate Abdul Matin Khushru and Abul Hasnat Abdullah of Awami League, A K M Shahidul Islam (Bachchu) of Jatiya Party and Kazi Shamsur Rahman of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Relief Secretary M A Hakim and Senior officials of the ministry were also present.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the delegates conference of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Muktiyoddha Dal at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium yesterday. Minister for LGRD Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed (Bir Bikram), Minister of State for Land M Kabir Hossain and Mir Shawkat Ali MP also seen on the dais. Story on page one — PID photo

'Bangabandhu's role key to emergence of Bangladesh'

An open discussion in observance of the 18th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was held yesterday at the Bangabandhu Avenue here under the auspices of Awami Shilpi Gosthy, reports BSS.

Speaking as the chief guest on the occasion Justice KM Sobhan said our freedom was not achieved in a day. The emergence of Bangladesh was the result of a long political history and process.

Justice Sobhan said many nationalist leaders have contributions to the acceleration of the process of the independence but the history would testify that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman played the key role in the emergence of this sovereign country.

Chaired by Salahuddin Badal, President of Awami Shilpi Gosthy, the function was addressed, among others, by Awami League leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Obaidul Kader, Mohammad Hanif, Mofazzal Hossain Maya, Prof Nilma Ibrahim, Film maker Alamgir Kumkum, Sheikh Abdul Hakim of Joy Bangla Shilpi Gosthy and Abdul Hakim of Awami League Shilpi Gosthy.

BKSMA demands resignation of State Minister for Textiles

By Staff Correspondent Bangladesh Krishak Samik Mukti Andolan (BKSMA) President Krishak Mohammad Sadek yesterday demanded resignation of the State Minister for Textiles Major (ret'd) Manman for failing to solve the problems existing in the textiles sector.

The leader during a meeting with a group of labourers' representatives in the city said that Maj Manma, instead of solving the problems in textiles sector, was increasing problems by closing down a number of mills. Sadek also urged the government to stop whole sale privatisation of mills saying that it would not benefit the sector.

Car stolen

By Staff Correspondent A car was stolen from Myemensingh Road in the city yesterday evening.

Dhanmondi police said, the white Datsun 100 a (Dhaka Ga 529) car was parked in front of Eastern Plaza near the Sonargaon Hotel. The owner found the car missing at about 8 pm. A case was lodged with Dhanmondi police.

Training on drug abuse prevention begins

By Staff Correspondent A training programme on drug abuse prevention got underway at Bangladesh Management Development Centre (BMDC) yesterday afternoon.

The two-day programme, designed for voluntary organisations and organised by Bangladesh Inter-Religious Brotherhood Association (BIRBA) was inaugurated by the Acting Director General of Narcotics Control Department Syed Muniruddin with Masuda Shahid in the chair.

In the opening session the role of media in drug prevention was highlighted by Nazrul Islam, while Dr Syed Kamaluddin spoke on the symptoms of drug addicts in the second session. Both the sessions were chaired by BMDC Director (Admin) Md Nuruddin.

The training programme was meant to enlighten the anti-drug abuse activists about the severity of the problem, the organisers said.

Dr Anisuzzaman said that we were indebted to Rabin-

Vested quarters out to erase 'Bangalee nationalism'

By DU Correspondent Prominent poets, litterateurs, teachers and journalists yesterday alleged that a vested quarters were trying to erase the 'Bangalee' nationalism by distorting history.

They were speaking in a discussion on 'Bangalee, Bangladesh and Rabindra-Nazrul-Mujib' arranged by Bangalee Chetona Biskash Kendra at the TSC auditorium of the Dhaka University.

The speakers also alleged that the circle which opposed the independence of the country was conspiring to misrepresent the actual history to the new generation.

The discussion was participated by Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Dr Anisuzzaman, Syed Samsul Haq, Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Justice Kamaluddin Hossain, Professor Mustafa Nurul Islam. Noted poet Shamsur Rahman attended the function as the chief guest.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, in his speech, said 'We cannot think of Bangladesh without Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.' Condemning the government, Sobhan Chowdhury said that we hardly could hear the name of Bangabandhu in national media.

Dr Anisuzzaman said that we were indebted to Rabin-

dranath for language and literature, to Nazrul for spirit and to Mujib for his unique role in the emergence of Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu was killed brutally as he wanted to reach the mass people, Anisuzzaman added.

Kabir Chowdhury boldly mentioned that we could be 'Bangaladeshi' citizen but our nationality was 'Bangalee'.

We have to build a Bangabandhu memorial monument in the capital, Kabir Chowdhury added.

Expressing deep concern over the rapid rise of communal forces in the country, poet Shamsur Rahman said that religion was for the mankind, not mankind for the religion.

Biswas, Khaleda greet President PM of Moldova

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has felicitated Mircha Ion Snegur, President of the republic of Moldova, on the occasion of its Independence Day, reports BSS.

In a message to President Mircha, President Biswas wished him continued peace and prosperity.

In a separate message Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has greeted Andrei N Sangeli, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova on the occasion of its Independence Day.

In the message to Prime Minister Sangeli, Begum Zia expressed the hope that the existing friendly relations between the two countries would be further developed in the coming years.

Happy Birthday

To

Shaan

From

Mam, Dad, Nanna, Nana, and Mamu



A cultural function organised by Nazrul Institute at its auditorium yesterday in observance of Nazrul's death anniversary. — Star photo

Police sergeant dead

CHITTAGONG, Aug 26: Police sergeant Abul Kayum who was seriously injured in a road accident on Tuesday succumbed to his injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) today. He was 32, reports BSS.

Port police said, Sergeant Kayum received serious head injury when a speeding truck knocked him down while he was on duty at the road connecting port.

He was admitted to CMCH after the accident.

Prof Nurul Islam clarifies

National Prof Nurul Islam in a statement yesterday (Thursday), clarifying on his recent interview with UNB, said 'Students admitted to MBBS courses from 1989 onward under the Institute of Applied Health Sciences (IAHS) affiliated to Chittagong University have been given option to take their final examinations under Chittagong University or under the University of Science and Technology (USTC), Chittagong. There is no compulsion on them to take their examination under USTC.'

'Nazrul can be evaluated thru' more research'

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia yesterday stressed the need for publication of all unpublished works of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, reports BSS.

He said Nazrul should be evaluated properly through increased research works to derive inspiration from his works.

The minister was addressing a discussion on 'elements of Folw Culture in Nazrul's Works,' organised by Nazrul Institute at its premises in observance of his 17th death anniversary as the chief guest.

Presided over by pro-Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Wakil Ahmed. The meeting was addressed by Prof Rafiqul Islam, Prof M Abdul Qayyum, Ataur Rahman and Executive Director of the institute Mohammad Mahfuzullah.

The Works Minister said the present government with its limited resources would extend all out support to promote research works on Nazrul.

In this connection, he recalled recent financial grant to Bangla Academy, which has published a book on Nazrul in four volumes.

Barrister Rafiq said Nazrul was brought up in an atmosphere of folk culture which influenced his works. He said the poet had a very close relationship with the environment where he had spent his boyhood.

Muggers storm hospital

By Staff Correspondent A group of armed bandits stormed a hospital at Uttara and allegedly robbed Tk 1,450.

Witnesses said, the miscreants huddled in a rental car approached the Green Land Hospital and forcibly took the cash at about 12.30 pm and fled away.

One of the robber, as told by the hospital sources, came to observe the condition at the hospital around afternoon. The staff recognised him as one of the muggers and handed him over to Uttara police after man-handling.

Police identified the accused as Marmun and told that a case was filed when contacted at 9.30 pm yesterday.

Weather Temperature likely to rise

By Staff Correspondent Sky will remain partly cloudy over the country with chances of temporary light rain or shower at one or two places over Chittagong, Barisal, Dhaka and Khulna divisions and weather may remain mainly dry over Rajshahi division during the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Friday).

Day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius over the country.

The country's highest temperature yesterday of 33.3 degree Celsius was recorded in Dinajpur and the lowest 23.0 degree was in Faridpur.

Chief amounts of rainfall recorded during the day time yesterday in different places across the country were: Dinajpur 27mm, Patuakhali 25 mm, Faridpur 21mm, Rangamati 13mm and Jessore 12mm.

The sun sets today (Friday) at 6.22 pm and rises tomorrow (Saturday) at 5:39 am.

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

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6pm
Dhaka	31.4	25.5	85	81
Chittagong	31.4	24.8	72	84
Rajshahi	31.0	25.4	100	90
Khulna	32.0	24.8	-	-
Barisal	30.5	25.6	89	82
Cox's Bazar	31.0	25.0	74	85
Sylhet	31.8	25.6	85	85
Dinajpur	33.3	25.4	85	84

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Bombay	Prestice	4916				
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