

**Dhaka Day by Day**

**The Origin of Fellow Feeling**

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

Having the next door cat come meowing for a saucer of milk is one thing. Opening the door to find a large sized monkey standing, arm outstretched for a tit-bit, is another. Yet this is precisely what happens in a neighbourhood in Dhaka.

Passing by the red houses in Second Capital, one may not notice much, apart from the curious circular architecture of the buildings or the lush greenery that surrounds them.

Lively youngsters play football on the field, young housewives stroll with their babies, and lovers walk along the Sangsad lake. If you look



Let us call him Madhu

close enough however, you will see a crowd forming near the gate, on the wall or right on the road. The centre of attraction is a big, tough-looking primate with sandy tresses and an expression that may range from benignity to frightening viciousness. Nobody knows where he has come from or why he ever chose to live in a place where he has no companion of his own species to play with. Perhaps it is the abundance of thick mango, 'krishna chura' and banana trees — something quite rare in this city nowadays. Or is it the hospitality he gets from his human friends who look upon him with a mixture of affection and awe?

Madhu, as we shall call him for convenience's sake and since nobody knows his 'real' name, can be seen in the afternoons sitting on the gate watching the passers-by who are at first taken aback at the sight of a middle-aged primate staring back at them. Newcomers to the neighbourhood, once they have overcome the shock, are fascinated by him and stand to watch him for a few minutes. The residents of the neighbourhood, however, are much more familiar and at ease with Madhu who never fails to make the kids squeal with delight.

Although he has no fixed home Madhu enjoys a fair share of the hospitality of the residents. "When he is hungry he comes and knocks on the door and holds out his hand, everyone gives him food — there are plenty of leftovers to spare,"

says a young housewife who has been seeing Madhu in the area for the last two years. "During the mango season I think he alone had most of the mangoes," she laughs.

As expected, Madhu is a source of great fun for the children. Every afternoon the kids stand around him watching his antics. Sometimes they feed him bananas or chocolate or ice-cream that they are willing to sacrifice for their neighbourhood pet. With his long legs and nimble hands, Madhu will walk towards you and take the piece of goody from your hand — whether you offer it or not! He will then walk back and munch away happily totally non-plussed by the sensation he is creating. Watching him peel off the paper of a 'choc-bar', pick up the chocolate coating and then polish it off with great gusto, makes one realize what Darwin was talking about in his theory of evolution.

Not unlike many of us, Madhu is also quite temperamental. Sometimes when feeble minded characters try to tease him by throwing stones or making faces, Madhu is prompt to show his contempt. He bites them. This however does not deter the scores of people who crowd around him everyday. On the other hand, if he happens to like someone he will show his affection by putting his arms around the person who may either appreciate this display of fondness or be petrified by it.

A few months ago, some residents who were a little disturbed to see a 'wild' monkey on the loose in their neighbourhood, decided to call the local zoo to take 'the animal where it belongs'. Luckily for Madhu, the response from the zoo authorities to such an indignation was apathetic, "we already have too many 'bandars' (monkeys), what will we do with another one?"

Thus, for this lovable monkey, it is free swaying from tree to tree and free meals from his human friends. At times, however, Madhu's eyes have a sad, far-away expression that shows his sense of isolation, having neither kith nor kin to call his own. It is perhaps, nostalgia for a Dhaka that was once known as "the city of monkeys".

**IPM system for mosquito management suggested**

Introduction of integrated pest management (IPM) system instead of the present pesticide-based control measures for mosquito management in Dhaka city was suggested in a talk in the capital yesterday by entomologist and pesticide expert Dr Manjur A Chowdhury, reports BSS.

Giving the talks, on "Mosquito Management in Dhaka City" at the weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Shyamoli, Dhaka Dr Chowdhury said, in IPM system appropriate combination of control tools and techniques are applied which are environmentally safe and economically feasible and have lasting effect.

He said under this system the control measures are taken through biological and physical methods, pesticide application, source reduction and habitat modification.

He said under biological control predators and mosquito-eating fishes, which are natural enemies of mosquito, and species of aquatic plants which reduce mosquito breeding could be introduced.

He said the pesticides se-

lected for use in mosquito control should be non-harmful to bio-control agents and should not pose any danger to other non-target species.

He said the innumerable number of water bodies in the city covering about 5000 acres of land have high levels of organic pollution and are choked with decomposed vegetation and submerged and floating debris which serve as ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

He suggested creation of public awareness through organised campaign so that their cooperation could be received for cleaning the breeding grounds, reducing their organic pollution and implementing different measures in this regard.

Referring to the expensive mosquito control programme of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) which spends around Taka 10 crore every year without any visible and lasting effects, Dr Chowdhury said the DCC had no entomologists in its payroll in the 700 plus strong mosquito control units. He said entomologists were trained to solve problems caused by insects including mosquitoes.

**Tk 4,000 cr WHO plan for Ctg city**

CHITTAGONG, Nov 11: Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin Wednesday said that Chittagong City Corporation area would be turned into a 'healthy city' — the first of its kind in South East Asia — at a cost of one billion US dollars equivalent to Taka 4,000 crore, reports BSS.

The amount would be provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in phases.

Talking to local journalists at the City Corporation auditorium, Nasiruddin said the WHO had prepared a final action plan which was expected to be implemented in phases from 1994 to 2000.

The World Health Organisation first evolved the concept of a 'healthy city' in Europe in 1986 in view of the detrimental effects on environment and socio-economic conditions due to massive urbanisation and industrialisation in the devel-

oped countries, the Mayor said, adding that with the making of Chittagong a healthy city, the total number of healthy cities across the world would be 36.

Nasiruddin said that Andrew Lyon, an advisor of the WHO, during his recent visit to Chittagong, presented a keynote paper at a two-day workshop and prepared the city health plan with priority objectives of improvement of the living standard of the people of the slum areas, creation of income-generating projects, improvement of mother and child health, water and sanitation.

Giving an account of the different ongoing development projects, Nasiruddin said that Taka 45 crore was spent in the current fiscal year for a total of 550 projects including construction of city streets, community latrines, digging of the Mirzakhal and Nasirkhal, and a children's park.

**New Australian HC arrives**

Ken Aspinall, the Australian High Commissioner designate to Bangladesh, arrived in the capital yesterday to take up his new assignment, reports BSS.

Sahata Zarab, Ambassador of Palestine and dean of the diplomatic corps in Bangladesh, and several other heads of mission including high commissioners of Canada and Pakistan, were present at the airport to receive him.

**UNFPA executive in city**

Joseph Van Arendonk, Deputy Executive Director of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) arrives in the capital yesterday on a five-day official mission to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

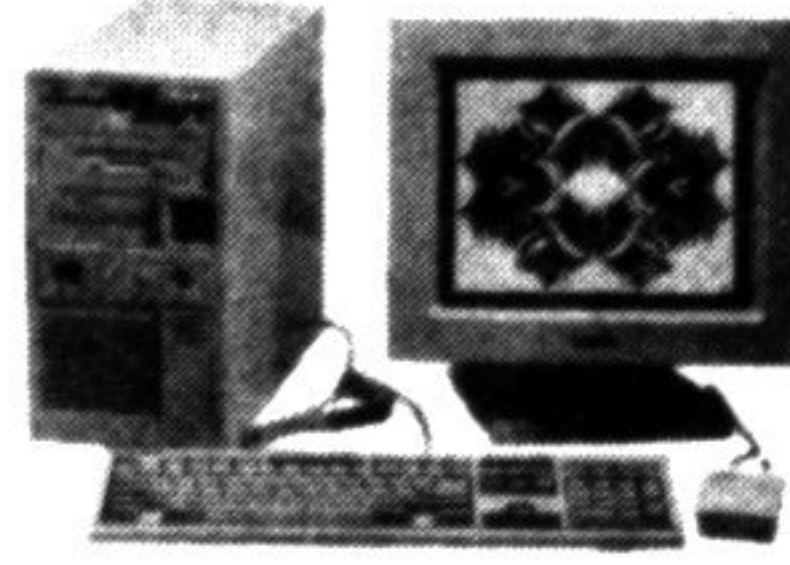
During his visit, Arendonk will meet the Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Karal Iqbal Yusuf and State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moeen Khan.

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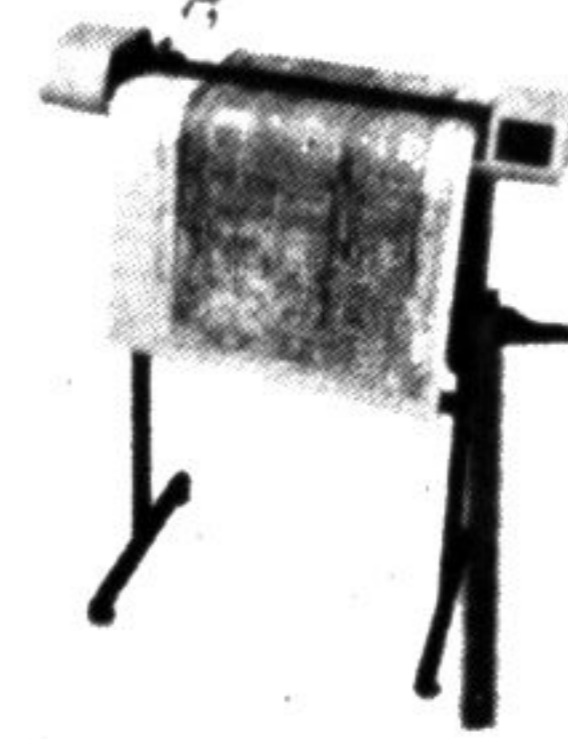
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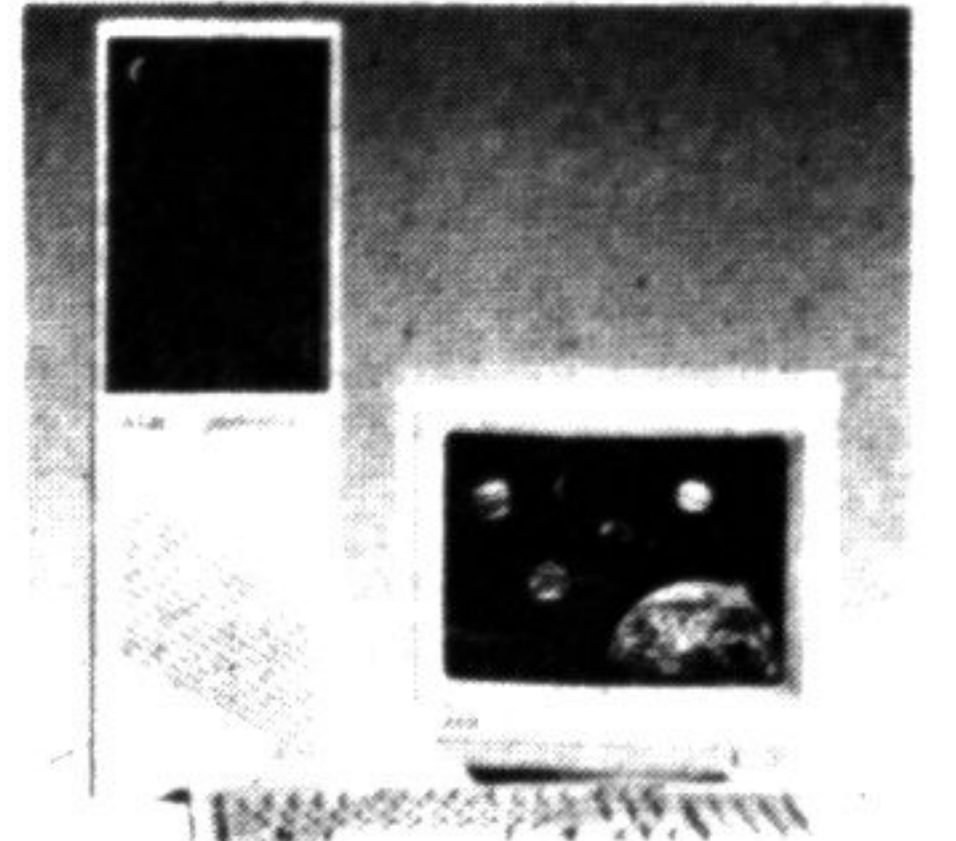


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