

Dhaka Day by Day

Fires on the Pavement

by Parveen Anam

Winter is the time of mellow fruitfulness. The lucky few manage to go to village to partake in winter delicacies like the 'pitha' and the celebrations like the 'melas'. It's a beautiful time of the year when we are not attacking each other and is a time when the Dhakaite is generally in a festive mood, trying to enjoy himself as best as he can before the cruel summer months descend on him with all the accompanying woes of water shortages and power failures.

And yet, it is perhaps a rude reality that as for some it is a beauteous time of the year, for others it has its difficulties. Those are the Dhakaites known in government parlance as the 'pavement dwellers'. These are the people who float across the city in search of work and of course not finding any, set up their household on the pavements. They actually settle there quite comfortably all by themselves.

Those at the helm of affairs make a big bang and like to 'evict' them every so often, with much publicised pictures in the newspapers, promptly followed by a bit less publicised brick-batting, usually targeting the hapless driver of the car, who unfortunately happens to be passing by at that time. And of course as soon as the men responsible for their eviction leave, the squatters are back. With a vengeance it seems. Oh, it's a different time come elections, naturally, when somehow the squatters feel quite comfortable, with the authorities looking the other way.

However, what is an inescapable part of these pavement dwellers' miserable existence is their obvious need for food and warmth.



Especially warmth in these cold months. And living off the earth, as it were, they take full advantage of their surroundings to provide themselves with heat and warmth. It is not uncommon to see groups of these unfortunate beings, huddled around small fires on the pavements, which they have lighted to provide momentary relief from the cold. What is interesting is the source of this fire. He is hardly expected to be able to buy the firewood and yet the fire crackles merrily.

If the police or any law enforcing agency, out to do its job properly, would take the trouble, it would immediately notice the source of the 'firewood'. These are the little bamboo fencing dotting the sides of the roads, put there to protect the saplings the government plants every so often in its much publicised 'tree plantation week.' These are rather pretty looking round fences, protecting the wee plants, planted at the order of the relevant authority. The purpose of this pretty round fence is to let the plant grow into a tree without being eaten up by the cows and goats wandering around on the roads of the city. What of course is not seen by the 'authorities' is the tearing up of these very same bamboo fences by the 'pavement people' and then used for firewood, with entire families happily squatting round the fire. The tax-payer obviously is not only paying for the bamboo fence put there for a noble cause, but is carrying the cause even further by providing warmth to the people who tear it up and light a bonfire with the authorities looking the other way.

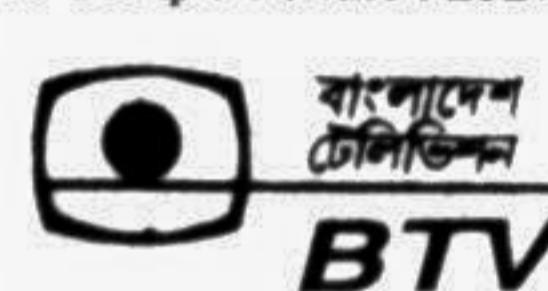
Right on the pavement. The patrol police have a very funny way of looking the other way.

FEJB to study Farakka's impact on environment

The executive committee of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) yesterday decided to initiate an in-depth field study and a series of reports on the devastating impact of Farakka on environment, economy and life in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The executive committee of the FEJB in its meeting held in the morning at the Press Institute of Bangladesh also decided to undertake study and organise seminars on water resource management, poverty and deforestation, coastal afforestation, environmental impact statement, technological dumping, waste disposal in the Bay of Bengal by the Western countries, sanitation and public health during the current year.

FEJB general secretary Quamrul Islam Chowdhury placed a draft workplan for 1994-95 at the meeting for its consideration. The executive committee after detailed discussion unanimously adopted the workplan of the FEJB.



Saturday

4:30	Opening announcement
4:45	Al-Quran
5:10	Programme summary
5:45	Stories to Remember
6:40	News in Bangla
7:05	Mahe Ramadan
8:00	Shishangan
8:30	Banshore
8:30	News in Bangla
9:00	Mati-o-Manush
9:00	Nazrul song
10:00	News in English
10:30	Drama serial: Dallas
11:15	Khabar/The News
11:25	Tomorrow's programme summary
11:30	Closing

Association president Ruhul Amin Majumdar presided.

Weather

Dry weather likely

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather with fair sky is likely to prevail over Bangladesh during the next 12 hours commencing 6 am today (Saturday).

The Met Office forecasts, day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The Met office adds, rainfall likely over the country within a week.

The country's highest temperature yesterday of 31.5 degrees Celsius was recorded in Satkhira and the lowest of 11.0 degrees in Srimangal.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 6:03pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 6:17am.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and relative humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday are:

Cities/Towns	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9am	6pm
Dhaka	30.4	14.4	56	51
Chittagong	30.5	17.6	74	51
Rajshahi	30.4	13.5	65	49
Khulna	31.2	16.6	97	-
Barisal	30.8	15.6	60	67
Cox's Bazar	31.0	18.0	47	66
Sylhet	29.2	14.5	56	51
Dinajpur	29.0	14.4	76	45



Goods worth about Tk 15 lakh of an electronics shop at the Outer Stadium was gutted yesterday. — Star photo

BDR inter-sector qirat, azan competition

The inter-sector qirat and azan competition of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) held at the Peekhana central Jame Mosque after Juma prayers yesterday, reports BSS.

Forty six competitors took part in the three-day competition. Chittagong sector secured the championship while Rangpur sector became runner up.

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The applications along with full bio-data and copies of educational qualifications should be sent not later than 31/3/94 to:

The High Commission of Sri Lanka

House No : 22, Road No: 56,

Gulshan 2.

D-162

রাংস পরিবারে

নতুন উপহার

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
মিত্রসূচি
রঙিন চিত্তি

এখন
বাংলাদেশের
ঘরে ঘরে



রাংস

পুরাতন বিমান বন্দর সড়ক, ফোনঃ ৩২৫০০১-৮.

পিডিএ এন্ডেমিট, টাটাম, ফোনঃ ২১১২২৪, শো ক্রমঃ কাকরাইল, ঢাকা

Cold storage inaugurated

Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam yesterday said, present government is committed to ensure the fair price of agri-products to farmers by providing adequate storage and other facilities.

The minister was addressing the inaugural function of a cold storage at Makuhuri under Munshiganj district yesterday. Deputy Minister for LGRD also addressed it.