

Dhaka Day by Day

Cultural Shocks and Surprises

by Sonya M Sultan

For the past two years, I have been studying at Trinity College, Cambridge, for a degree in social and political science. As my family lives in Dhaka, I come home each year during my summer holidays and without fail am always struck by the difference between life in Cambridge and that in Dhaka.

The university town of Cambridge functions in a queer way. It is a smallish town which is dominated by the university and pretty buildings built by different kings of England from the 14th century onwards, scattered all over. The academic circles of the university have created a little dream world for themselves.

I have often wandered around Cambridge catching only snatches of conversation and decided that everyone there is completely insane.

Instead of having lighthearted conversations about the film they saw last night, their most recent romance or their passion for tennis or football, outwardly normal young students discuss what they find exciting about Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Or why Marx's theory of *Das Kapital* cannot be put into practice.

The professors at the university are called 'fellows' and they are a rare species of human beings. They are generally male, quite ancient and they are totally incapable of speaking coherently or of making themselves understood. When I started my course I was simply told that these 'fellows' were allowed to behave in a very erratic manner since they had all been certified 'brilliant' after publishing two hundred papers and three hundred books.

Thus in Cambridge, young undergraduates are expected to immerse themselves in academic pursuits, wander from library to library, possibly even live in one. The terrible food provided in the dining halls also contributes to the image of young half-starved academics who seem so engrossed in the pursuit of knowledge that they neglect their health. And after a hard day's work, the way to relax is to drink so much beer, port and wine that you cannot even stand straight, and just like the professors you admire so much, cannot even utter one coherent sentence.

From such a world, I fly back to Dhaka and in a sense normality. I'm happy to say, I haven't met anyone here, yet, who wanted to discuss Einstein's Theory of Relativity with me over a cup of tea. When I visit my friends, they do not produce a copy of the Communist Manifesto and start quoting Marx to me. Rather, I have been getting a regular dose of more 'down to earth' conversations — my parents discussing who should do the grocery shopping, a cousin telling me about her daughter's wedding, bar-

gaining with a rickshawalla about the fare, talking to our cook about her two children, so on so forth.

People's concerns in Dhaka seem much more tangible and relevant than in Cambridge and this tends to make Dhaka a much more lively city. Academic life is sometimes so 'quiet and peaceful' that even if the potatoes for lunch have been roasted in a different way, that appears exciting. In Dhaka, on the other hand, even a simple rickshaw ride may hold many surprises and/or shocks; you will be close to death a few times as the rickshaw driver will make sure you nearly get run over by a car or truck, you may be stopped and mugged at gunpoint or may be caught in some political procession demanding the hanging of one writer

or another. Now this is what is called living on the edge!

But that is not all. Dhaka has so much more to offer. Recently, I had great fun on a boat ride down the Buriganga. Now in Cambridge, boat rides on the river can be in keeping with the lifestyle — quiet, with beautiful landscapes on either side. My boat ride in Dhaka was much more eventful. As soon as I got off the rickshaw at Sadarghat, I had half a dozen street sellers around me, trying to convince me I needed to buy bright pink plastic sandals, a new *sari*, or even live chickens to take home. Then a boat owner offered me a 'special' rate for hiring his boat — Tk 50 per hour — whereas the ordinary price of Tk 35.

Once on the river, three young men on a motor boat with a loudspeaker began to sing the latest hits from Hindi films. All I could hear was "... Olay, olay, olay..." Now in Cambridge, British young people are so inhibited, I could never expect three young men to sing Hindi love songs to me across the river. So I was duly flattered.

Such things make me realise that Cambridge life is much too ordered and routinised. In such a context people only do what is expected and accepted. Whereas in Dhaka, nothing is predictable — government may change anytime, local *mastans* may cause a riot any moment, your neighbour may elope with a famous movie star, or strangers may sing to you across a river... And what makes life exciting is that Bengalees react passionately to almost everything — from the World Cup football to general elections. From Cambridge to Dhaka, it feels like putting down a piece of English literature one was reading, in order to enter a real-life soap-opera.



Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf speaking on the occasion of 12th death anniversary of former Chief Justice Syed AB Mahmud Hossain at the National Press Club auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Canadian cos keen to invest in energy sectors

Leading Canadian oil and gas companies have shown keen interest to invest in energy and mineral resources sector of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The willingness for ongoing and upcoming oil and gas projects were expressed by the executives of the internationally reputed oil and gas companies in an investment forum held at the International Trade Centre in Calgary of Canada on Wednesday.

Addressing the forum Bangladesh Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khader Mosharraf Hossain outlined an immense scope for investment in the fields of gas wells, mining and power generation in Bangladesh.

According to a delayed message, the minister appreciated the members of the investment forum the prospects

and importance of energy and mineral resources sector in Bangladesh.

Describing the present trend of growth and future projections in the national economy, he told the forum that the short-term energy need would call for multibillion dollar investment which is open to any international establishments.

"Recent economic indications in Bangladesh suggested a steady recovery of the national economy," said Dr Mosharraf, who is leading a 4-member Bangladesh delegation on a weeklong official tour.

He said the economy would attain further momentum with the developments in related socio-infrastructure sector resulting from the fiscal, economic and other reforms undertaken by the present government.

Tk 98000 disbursed among distressed women in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Aug 5: The city unit of Social Welfare Department today disbursed interest-free loan amounting to Tk. 98,000 among 54 poor and distressed women of Shree-rampur slum area, reports UNB.

Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi Abdul Malek disbursed the loans under CEDC project, in a simple ceremony which was presided over by Social Welfare officer Begum Badrul Laila.

The main objective of the loan distribution programme is to involve the poor and distressed women in socio-economic development activities of the country by creating employment opportunity for them, said a PID handout.



4:30	Opening announcement
4:35	Al-Quran
4:45	Programme summary
5:10	Children's programme: Surjamukhi
5:25	News in Bangla
6:00	Musical programme: Kid Songs
6:30	Tarunnya: Youngmen's magazine programme
7:00	Angicor: Programme based on population control
7:25	Banshari: Folk songs
8:00	Comedy Series: Major Dad
8:30	News in Bangla
9:00	Mati O Manush
10:00	Biswanatak: Programme on world classic drama
10:30	News in English
11:30	Drama Series: Dynasty
11:45	Khabar/The News
	Closing

Tk 2cr grant for renovation of N'ganj hospital

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf announced a grant of Taka two crore yesterday for the renovation and expansion works of 100-bed Narayanganj General Hospital (Victoria) to provide modern health-care facilities, reports BSS.

If necessary, more grants would be given, he added.

The Health Minister made the announcement while addressing as chief guest a meeting organised by the doctors, nurses, employees and other staff of the hospital at its compound in the morning.

Presided over by Dr. Moqbul Hossain, Civil Surgeon of Narayanganj, the meeting was addressed by Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Syed Shahidul Huq Jamal MP and chairman, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

City BNP bodies meet today

A joint meeting of all vice-presidents, officials of Dhaka City BNP, presidents and general secretaries of thana and ward units and ward commissioners belonging to the party will be held at city BNP office at the Nawab Yusuf Market at 7pm today, reports BSS.



Death anniversary of MA Khan today

The tenth death anniversary of Rear Admiral Mahub Ali Khan, former Chief of Naval Staff and Minister for Communications and Agriculture, will be observed today, a press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

A milad mahfil will be held at "Mahbub Bhaban", House No 40, Road No 5, Dhanmondi in the city after Asr prayers.

An elaborate programme has been organised on the occasion. The programme includes laying of wreaths at the Banani graveyard, Quran Khwani, distribution of sweets in a number of orphanages and special prayers.

Rear Admiral M A Khan Memorial committee, Sylhet, has also arranged a separate programme.

Provide legal aid to helpless: Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday stressed the need for establishing rule of law in the society by providing legal aid and education to the helpless people, reports UNB.

Inaugurating a seminar on 'Legal Aid, Legal Education and Social Justice' at Hotel Sonargaon, he said fair judicial system was essential to establish rule of law in the country. "It can be achieved by ensuring

independence of judiciary".

Organised by Monthly Legal Aid, the inaugural session was addressed by Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, Advocate Khawaja Golam Murshed, Advocate ASM Khasru and advisor to the Kirara, No Kai, Eichi Koishi, Justice MH Rahman presided.

President Biswas said lawyers and conscious section of the society could work as catalyst in establishing rule of

law on a firm root.

Highlighting the role of the lawyers in flourishing legal system in the country, he said legal practitioners had a responsibility to look after the distressed people who were depriving of justice due to their financial crisis.

He also urged all concerned to come forward to help flourish the life of every citizen in the light of law.

Weather

Light rain likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershower is likely at many places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions, reports UNB.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

In its extended outlook for the subsequent five days, Met office predicted deteriorating weather.

Meantime, Jessore experienced the highest 50 mm rain yesterday. Chittagong had 33 mm shower and Sitakund 19 mm during the period.

Country's highest temperature 34.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Dinapur while the lowest 25 degrees at Majdicourt and Hattiya yesterday.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 6:39 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 5:30 am.

The maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity in some major cities and towns recorded yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	31.7	26.78	85	85
Chittagong	28.8	25.6	95	92
Rajshahi	32.6	27.4	92	89
Khulna	33.7	27.5	90	79
Barisal	31.3	26.2	87	86

Military Lands and Cantonments Directorate

Ministry of Defence
Dhaka Cantonment
Dhaka.

Wanted

Applications are hereby invited for the post of Lecturer in English for Jessore Cantonment Degree College under the management of Cantonment Board, Jessore Cantonment. Bonafide male and female citizens of Bangladesh fulfilling the following requirement may apply to the Director, Military Lands and Cantonments, Ministry of Defence, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

Name of Post	Educational Qualification	Pay Scale	Age
Lecturer in English	2nd. Class Hons with 2nd Class Master's Degree, or 1st Class Master's Degree.	2850-5155/-	Less than 35 years.

Facilities of 40% House rent allowance, Medical allowance @ Tk. 150/-, Rest & Recreation allowance, Festival Bonus, Time-Scale and Provident Fund/Pension after confirmation as per rules.

Application complete with Bio-data and details of educational qualifications and experiences along with attested copies of certificates from Class I Gazetted Officer and three copies of recent passport size photograph along with Tk. 50/- crossed postal order or Bank Draft in favour of Cantonment Executive Officer, Jessore Cantonment, Jessore should reach the undersigned on or before 15th August, 1994.

Interview cards will be issued only to those are found suitable while preliminary scrutinizing.

Director

Military Lands and Cantonments
Ministry of Defence
Cantonment Board Building No. 7
Dhaka Cantonment.

DJP-974-31/7
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সর্বসাধারণ ও বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের সম্মিলিত গ্রাহকগণকে এই মর্মে অবহিত করা যাইতেছে যে, অত্র ব্যাংকের নিম্নবর্ণিত শাখাসমূহকে পরিচালনগত ও প্রশাসনিক কারণে ইহাদের পার্শ্ববর্তী শাখাসমূহের সহিত সম্পর্কিত একীভূত করা হইয়াছে। সর্বসাধারণ ও সম্মিলিত গ্রাহকগণকে স্বগণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি, স্বগণ আদায় ও আমানত সম্পর্কিত সকল প্রকার লেনদেন এর জন্য একীভূত শাখাসমূহের বিপরীতে উল্লেখিত শাখার সহিত যোগাযোগ করিতে বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাইতেছে।

ক্রমিক নং	একীভূত শাখার নাম	যে শাখার সহিত একীভূত করা হইয়াছে	থানা	জেলা
১।	পতন	নূরপুর শাখা	বি-বাড়ীয়া	বি-বাড়ীয়া
২।	আড়াইসিধা বাজার	আতপল্লী শাখা	বি-বাড়ীয়া	বি-বাড়ীয়া
৩।	পাকশিমুল	সরাইল শাখা	সরাইল	বি-বাড়ীয়া
৪।	শাহবাড়পুর	সরাইল শাখা	সরাইল	বি-বাড়ীয়া
৫।	সোনারামপুর	বাহারামপুর	বাহারামপুর	বি-বাড়ীয়া
৬।	দরিয়াসৌলত	বাহারামপুর শাখা	বাহারামপুর	বি-বাড়ীয়া
৭।	সলিমগঞ্জ	জীবনগঞ্জ ও নবীনগর	নবীনগর	বি-বাড়ীয়া
৮।	আবুর হাট	লিলি মার্কেট ও বিএসডি হাট শাখা	মীরশরাই	চট্টগ্রাম
৯।	ওয়ারহাউস	মীরশরাই ও আবুতোরাব বাজার শাখা	মীরশরাই	চট্টগ্রাম
১০।	ধলঘাটা	মাতার বাড়ী শাখা	মহেশবাড়ী	কক্সবাজার
১১।	রৌহা	নেত্রকোনা শাখা	নেত্রকোনা	নেত্রকোনা
১২।	খারাবাদ বাইনতলা	বিরিট বাজার শাখা	বাটিঘাটা	কুলনা
১৩।	দুর্গাপুর	কুমারবাড়ী শাখা	কুমারবাড়ী	কুষ্টিয়া

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