

Dhaka Day by Day

Life in a Box

by Samia Islam

Back in the old days a must among home builders was a little piece of grassy plot, extravagantly called the lawn, surrounded by as many trees as the owner could accommodate. Today a must among householders is a security guard and an intercom with at least one lift and a generator for emergencies. Are we under siege or something? Not yet but we need the protection right in our homes to be on the safe side anyway. We can do away with trees which will curb the spread of mosquitoes and other bugs and also enable free flow of light which has become a luxury as well in this era when high rises have taken a form of concrete jungle. Yet they are a sort of dream havens. But what about the people who are already residing in such complexes — rented or otherwise? They are happy and lucky no doubt with their share of the cake. But even a creamy piece of cake has its down-sides.

One would think that with at least 45 to 50 families — sometimes more — living literally under the same roof, the social interaction would be imperative just for day to day survival. Life in the same compound has to give rise to a high level of co-operation between and among the adults as well as their offsprings. Reality, though, is far from it. Under the pseudo intimacy there develops a subtle current of petty jealousies concerning, maybe, the kids' new toys or the make of the family car or any such triviality. Typical conversation of parents can be left up to the imagination. But when the children do as their elders it has to break your heart.

When the humans are not in direct contact with the nature surrounding them then all this incompatibility is quite natural. Global warming has all of us shaking in our boots while the day to day behaviour of man is already changing and doing greater damage than the green house effect. In a 1400 sq ft flat where sunlight is rare, greenery consists of the two dying

money-plants suffering in the 4' by 8' verandah which in turn is always occupied with wet clothing forever hanging on the clothes-lines, then it's not a surprise that people are becoming impatient, snappy and irritable. For the children it's worse. At a time when they are curious about everything around them, when they are growing both mentally and physically, they are cooped up in a flat where it's hard to walk without bumping into each other. If the car park serves as the play area for the toddlers then what of the teenager? Brian Laras and Sachin Tendulkars who drive sixers right through windows and parked cars in the cricket season and Bebetos and Romarios who drop-kick balls that land on the unsuspecting passer-by's head. The girls, however, remain out of the scene.

Modern-day apartment living brings you in contact with the Saharan Climate — scorching heat in summer and freezing cold in winter. To let in what little light and air you can get, you try to open some windows but people from all around stop whatever they were doing to take a look inside your lounge or your bedrooms so you have to draw the curtains and keep them that way till hell freezes over. It's hard not to take a peek if the other window is only an arms length away but according to building construction laws the distance between two buildings should be one and a half times the height of the building. Going as high up and away from the ground as they can people are not only losing contact with reality, they are also in most cases making snug little booby traps for themselves and their children. How many complexes are equipped with standard fire fighting equipment, how many have provisions for fire escapes?

When Khalil Gibran wrote about houses that would not only house bodies but souls as well, he surely did not have an apartment in mind.



What's on today...

Cultural evening: The Cultural Department of the Russian Federation in cooperation with the Serov Academy of Fine Arts has arranged a discussion and cultural programme on the occasion of Martyred Intellectuals' Day. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre (House-510, Road-7, Dhanmondi). Time: 5:30 pm. Chief guest: Justice KM Sobhan. Special guests: Prof Abdus Selim and Sergei Eramyev, First Secretary of the Embassy.

Shilpakala Academy discussion: The academy will hold a discussion in observance of the Martyred Intellectuals' Day. Venue: Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Time: 5:30 pm. Chief guest: DU Vice Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed.

Rotary Club of Dhaka Mid-Town: The club's weekly meeting will be held. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Dhaka South: The weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 5:30 pm.

HR discussion: The Amnesty International Bangladesh Trade Union Group and the Amnesty International Women Trade Union Group will hold a discussion. The programme will be held as part of the Amnesty International Bangladesh's week-long programme to mark the 46th Human Rights Declaration. Venue: 81, Shegun Bagicha. Time: 3pm.

...and tomorrow

Seminar: A regional seminar will be held under the auspices of the Economics Deptt, JU and the Bangladesh Economics Association. Venue: Social Science Faculty gallery. Time: 10 am.

Bangladesh to observe tourism year in 97

Bangladesh will observe Tourism Month in 1995 and 1996, and Tourism Year in 1997 to promote tourism in the country, reports UNB. This was decided at a meeting held at the head office of the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) yesterday with State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan in the chair. The meeting was told that the observance of Tourism Month-1994 had created more tourism awareness among the people of the country and as a result, more foreign tourists would be motivated to visit Bangladesh. Secretary of the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry Noor Uddin Al-Masood, Chairman of BPC Abdus Samad Bhuiyan, Managing Director of Bangladesh Biman Ahabab Ahmed, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Air Commodore M Shamser Ali and other officials were present at the meeting.

BTV non-gazetted employees observe strike

Non-gazetted employees of the Bangladesh Television yesterday observed a day-long strike to press home their 15-point demand, reports UNB. A press release of the TV Non-Gazetted Employees Welfare Association said the work-stoppage, however, exempted the telecast of programmes of the President, Prime Minister, visiting VIPs and news as well as security and essential services. The employees also held a rally presided over by Mir Ahmed Hossain, president of the association, and urged the government to meet their demands and materialise commitment made by the authorities. The press release said that they also expressed the resolve to go ahead with their agitation programmes if their demands were not met.



Discussants at a memorial meeting on Jahanara Imam at Bakul Tala of the Institute of Fine Arts in the city yesterday. The Shamilitya Sangskritik Jote organised the programme. — Star photo

V-Day programmes

The government has drawn up an elaborate programme to celebrate the Victory Day on December 16, an official hand-out said yesterday, reports UNB.

The programme of the day, a public holiday, will begin with a 31-gun salute and hoisting of national flag atop all public and private buildings. Illumination in the evening will also mark the occasion.

The President will place wreaths on behalf of the nation at the National mausoleum for martyrs at Savar and the Prime Minister will also lay wreaths there.

A colourful Shishu-Kishore rally will be held at the Dhaka National Stadium. Prime Minister Begun Khaleda Zia will inspect the march past and take salute.

The members of the band parties of Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force, Bangladesh Rifles, Police, Ansars-VDP and civil defence will play bands at the selected places of the capital.

The Naval ships will remain open for public display at Chittagong, Khulna and Mongla ports, Sadarghat, Narayanganj and Barisal IWTA terminals from 3 pm to 5 pm on the day. In all district and thana headquarters executing Dhaka district, colourful march past will be held where Police, Ansars-VDP, Civil Defence and Boys Scouts, Girls Guide and BNCC will take part.

Rallies, sports competitions and boat races will also be arranged for school and college students in all district and thana sadars excepting Dhaka. In observance of the day, cultural functions will be arranged. The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, from its roving trucks, will render ses-

Mukarram Hussain Memorial Lecture

The 13th Mukarram Hussain Khundkar Memorial Lecture of the Department of Chemistry, Dhaka University was held at the lecture theatre of the Khundkar Biggan Bhaban in the city yesterday.

Professor Yoshisuke Tsude of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Science, Kanazawa University, Japan, delivered the memorial lecture titled "Total synthesis of Erythrina Alkaloids in Chiral Forms".

The Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University, Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, attended the function as chief guest. In his inaugural speech, the Vice-Chancellor recalled the contribution of renowned scholars and teachers of the university specially Professor Mukarram Hussain Khundkar to promoting education and research in chemistry.

The Chairman of the Chemistry Department, Professor M Giasuddin Ahmed, presided over the function.

'Caretaker govt against spirit of democracy'

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandker Mosharraf Hossain has said the current political crisis cannot be resolved without the sincerity of those political parties which created it, reports UNB.

"In parliamentary democracy, the question of caretaker government is not only unconstitutional, but also against the spirit of democracy," he told a party meeting at Daudkandi yesterday.

The minister maintained that a people's government could not be replaced by a selected government which virtually has no responsibility and accountability.

Referring to the People's Representation (Amendment) Bill, 1994 passed by Parliament making provision for issuance of voters' identity cards, he said it will be a milestone in holding free and fair elections.

This bears a great testimony of the BNP government's sincerity in establishing an independent election system, he said. Dr Mosharraf referred to

Exhibition by disadvantaged children

An exhibition of art works done by disadvantaged slum children will be held on December 15 at 2:30 pm at Rayerbazar Day Care Centre, House No 42, Zigatola.

Organised by the Terre des hommes (Switzerland), an organisation working for the disadvantaged children, the art works will cover different child issues and the Liberation period of Bangladesh.

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Weather

Temperature may fall

The mild cold, which is sweeping over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions and the regions of Mymensingh and Tangail, may continue for another 48 hours over Sylhet region, reports UNB. Met Office said dry weather with further fall by 1-2 degree Celsius in night temperature is likely to prevail throughout the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today. Yesterday's maximum temperature in Dhaka was 25 degrees Celsius and the minimum was 12.4 degrees while the country's highest temperature was recorded 27 in Teknaf and the lowest 8 degrees in Chuadanga. Percentage of humidity was 57 in the morning and 65 in the evening. The sun sets today at 5:14 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:33 am.

BTV
Wednesday

4:30	Opening
4:45	Sports programme
5:10	News in Bangla
5:25	Moner Katha
6:00	Banaphul
7:00	Open University
7:25	Tagore songs
8:00	News in Bangla
8:25	Jamaburni
9:00	Mini series: The Girl From Future
10:00	News in English
10:30	Kathamala
11:30	Khabar/The News
11:40	Announcement of tomorrow's programme
11:45	Closing