

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Glimpses of Bangladesh through Australian Eyes

by Gemini Wahhaj



John Reddish, Cherylene Drake (C) and Jenny Warren (R).

Cherylene Drake had no idea what to expect when she was chosen to represent Victoria's Rotarian Group Study Exchange Team to Bangladesh. She had read about the country in Australian newspapers; but all she could recall was floods and famines. After spending four busy weeks in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Jessore and Khulna, Cherylene is leaving with her mind warming with things to tell the folks back home about. "There's so much to see here," she said.

Each district of Rotary International — a branch of Rotary International — sponsors four non-Rotarians of outstanding background to visit another Rotary district in an exchange programme. "The purpose," says the Victorian team's local leader Rtn. PP Luthfur R Choudhury, "is the promotion of goodwill, international understanding, and of course a few lasting friendships." Cherylene Drake, professional educator of Rochester Secondary College, and Jenny Warren, a nurse, were among those selected to visit Bangladesh. In preparation for the trip, they studied politics, history and culture of their own country and Bangladesh. "So when we got here and picked up a newspaper," said Jenny Warren, "things made sense."

Jenny lived with a Rotarian family in Dhaka. The family had three children and a host of relatives visiting at any given time. There were about 17 to 18 people in their three-bedroom home, says Jenny. She was struck by the closeness of Bangladeshi families, and also by the way homes are built to accommodate generations of relatives. Family gatherings occurred on beds. Everyone would climb up and play cards or chat, with the TV blaring in the background and some child studying in a corner. In Australia, Jenny says, family gatherings are more common across the livingroom table.

Jenny and Cherylene also liked the food. They ate with their fingers, and they ate Bangali food almost everyday. When Jenny was staying with a host family outside Dhaka, they all just stared at her when she ate with her fingers. When asked if she was skilful, she said, "I try to look confident. Sometimes food will drip through, though." The group tasted *pithas* at a *pitha* mela and found them to be sweet. "Too sweet," says Jenny.

The team visited schools, hospitals and computer training institutes. Team leader, Dr

John Reddish, a medical practitioner and a District Governor Nominee (DGN) 1996-97, found Dhaka Medical College quite amazing because doctors and nurses worked so well under less than ideal conditions. The best medical facility the group came across was a private clinic on the road to Comilla, which was equipped with modern facilities.

Cherylene thought the places outside Dhaka were very pretty, specially Sylhet and Kushtia. They covered all the tourist spots, from Jalong to the Sundarbans. But sometimes they would wander into a village, and people would just surround them and stare. "They just stared", Cherylene said, "they never touched or pushed or poked like people in other countries." They also found villages that are more organised than others. Everyone had a trade, and each house had its own space. During the nationwide strike, the team was in Sylhet. They used motorbikes to get to the airport because it was the fastest vehicle allowed on the road, Jenny says she had her skirts hitched about her legs and the locals gave her some bewildering looks.

Team members felt that they were somehow sheltered. They never ate anything from the roadside, and they hardly ever walked in the city. "One day we three girls decided to go for a walk on our own," said Jenny. As soon as they were on the road, curious crowds surrounded them. "It wasn't such a good idea," Jenny says. Nevertheless, they managed to look around the city and do some shopping. Cherylene went to New Market and Jenny bought *Nakshikathas*, embroidered vests and calf leather at Aarong.

The women wore sarees and flowers to the Rotary Club's annual function. They say they looked very elegant and handled themselves quite well. Team leader John found the function itself amazing. During the drama, a Bangladeshi sat next to him and translated each piece of dialogue. John thought the drama, produced by the Drama Circle, was interesting.

The group enjoyed their trip tremendously. Says group leader John that he'll have a lot to tell people when he gets back home. Jenny says she just had to learn how to relax and enjoy things. As soon as she relaxed, things always just fell into place and managed to get done.

The Bangladeshi team will visit Australia in late February as part of the same exchange programme.

What's on today...

BDR exhibition: Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will hold an exhibition of handicrafts to mark the bicentennial celebration of BDR. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the exhibition. Venue: Ayyarannya, Pilkhana. Time: 11:35 am.

Publication Ceremony: The publication ceremony of the book *Debdusher Parbati* by Shafiqul Kabir will be held. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 4 pm.

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

Discussion: Santosh Gupta Sattartama Janmabarshika Udjapan Parishad will hold a discussion meet on the 70th birth anniversary of journalist Santosh Gupta. Venue: Biswa Shahitya Kendra auditorium. Time: 5 pm.

DCC community centre: The inauguration of a community centre, set up by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) at Word No. 59, will be held. Time 6:00 pm. DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif will inaugurate.

Rotary Club of Dhaka North West: The weekly meeting of the club will be held following the postponement of District Governor's official visit to the club. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

... and tomorrow

Seminar: The Bangladesh Manobiggan Samity will hold a seminar on 'Psychological and Educational Aspects of Technology Transfer in Developing Countries'. Venue: BANBEZ auditorium. Time: 3:30 pm.

ATAB office-bearers meet Mannan

The newly-elected office-bearers of the executive committee of the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) led by its president Dr H M B Iqbal called on the State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan at his office yesterday, reports BSS.

Dutch envoy meets Sircar

Ambassador of the Netherlands in Bangladesh Robert A Vornis called on Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar at the latter's office in the city yesterday, reports BSS. They discussed matters of mutual and bilateral interests.

Weather

Temperature may fall

Coastal regions of the country is likely to come under the grip of moderate to severe cold wave within next 48 hours commencing 6:00 am today, reports UNB.

The Met Office forecasts night temperature may fall by 2-3 degree Celsius or more at places over the country during the next 12 hours ending 6:00 pm today.

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country. In its outlook for subsequent two days the Met Office adds fair weather is likely to continue and further fall in night temperature is expected.

Giving extended outlook for another five days weathermen forecast, weather is likely to deteriorate.

Country's lowest temperature, 12.3 degrees Celsius, was recorded yesterday at Dinajpur while the highest 28.5 degrees at Cox's Bazar and Sitakund.

The sun sets today at 5:29 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:44 am.

City/Town	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Min.	Max	6 am	6 pm
Dhaka	14.4	26.5	84	67
Chittagong	17.4	27.8	73	63
Rajshahi	13.3	24.3	92	83

Australian envoy meets Shamsul

The High Commissioner of Australia in Bangladesh Kenneth Aspinall called on Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam at the latter's Secretariat office in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

During the discussion, they exchanged views on bilateral and mutual interests.

Indian HC visits IUB

High Commissioner of India in Bangladesh K Raghunath yesterday visited the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) at Baridhara in the capital, reports UNB.

President of IUB Dr. A Majeed Khan apprised the Indian HC of the mission and goals of the university.

Inner Wheel walkathon

In observance of the International Inner Wheel Day, the Inner Wheel District 328, Bangladesh organised a walkathon in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan led the walkathon.

The walkathon, aimed at creating social awareness among the public

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ECONOMIST REQUIRED

The World Bank Resident Mission plans to recruit a well-trained economist with demonstrated analytical skills and ability to work effectively as part of a team. The economist is expected to work as part of a three-member team in the Economics Unit of the World Bank Resident Mission. He/she is expected to contribute substantively to the macroeconomic monitoring, analysis and projections work of the Unit and to the building up of information about economic work done by other agencies.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Duties and Accountabilities:

The economist's main tasks will be as follows:

- o Build up the socio-economic data base on Bangladesh and update it on a regular basis by setting up a system of data gathering and compilation;
- o Use the data base to generate macro-economic projections from time to time with the aid of an existing macroeconomic model.
- o Work with the chief of the Economics Unit to refine and develop the macroeconomic model.
- o Carry out economic analysis and report periodically on topical issues; and
- o Keep abreast of economic work done by the Government, donors, research and academic institutions by liaising with the relevant institutions.

Requirements for the Position:

- o At least a Master's degree in Economics from a reputable University with good academic results.
- o Good background in macroeconomics and familiarity with Bangladesh's development problems and issues.
- o Strong analytical skills and familiarity with quantitative econometric techniques and data processing.
- o Strong computer skills and good familiarity with data, econometric and word processing softwares (Lotus 1-2-3, excel, TSP, SPSS, wordperfect and word).
- o Close familiarity with the sources of socio-economic data on Bangladesh.
- o Relevant working experience at home or abroad.
- o Demonstrated ability to write and communicate clearly and work effectively as part of a team.

Conditions:

The contract will be initially for a period of one year, subject to confirmation after three months. Because of the continuing nature of the assignment, the contract can be renewed. The selected candidate is expected to start working within one month of selection.

Applicants who meet the above requirements should apply to the World Bank Resident Mission in Bangladesh, 3A Paribagh, Dhaka, by January 31, 1995. Applications should be supported by a detailed and up-to-date C.V., academic transcripts, references and a sample of written work.

Interplast Italy operates upon 70 patients

By Staff Correspondent

Interplast Italy, a voluntary organisation of doctors specialised in plastic surgery which is now in Bangladesh, has examined 250 patients.

Of them, 70 have been operated upon and more 110 patients are expected to be treated before the departure of the eight member team on January 12, says a press release of Italian Embassy yesterday.

The visiting team, headed by Prof G Paolo Morselli comprises three plastic surgeons, two anaesthesiologists and Dr Lorena Passini and Dr Elisa Facelli, two specialist nurses.

The Interplast Italy, visiting Bangladesh for the fourth time since 1988 generally treats after effects of severe burn cases, deformity of face and limbs, tumours and consequences of traumas.

The organisation donated some surgical instruments and large quantities of medical supplies to the Plastic Surgery Department of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the past.

The Interplast also has trained a Bangladeshi plastic surgeon who is now working at the Plastic Surgery unit of DMCH.

Leader of the team Prof Morselli underscored the need for a hospital exclusively for plastic surgery as the first step in this field in Bangladesh.

There are only five plastic surgeons in Bangladesh with 120 million population. An estimated 1.19 million people fall victims to burn injuries and 2,500 to facial deformities every year.

APPOINTMENTS & TRANSFERS

Prof A K Shamsuddin Siddiquy has recently been appointed the Director General of Health Services, says a press release.

Born in 1941, he graduated in Medicine in 1964 and entered government service the following year. Later he did his MPhil (Medical) from the Dhaka University.

Obtaining a PhD from the United Kingdom, he became a professor in 1984. Principal in 1988 and a Director in the Directorate of Health Services in 1990.

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