

# Dhaka Day by Day

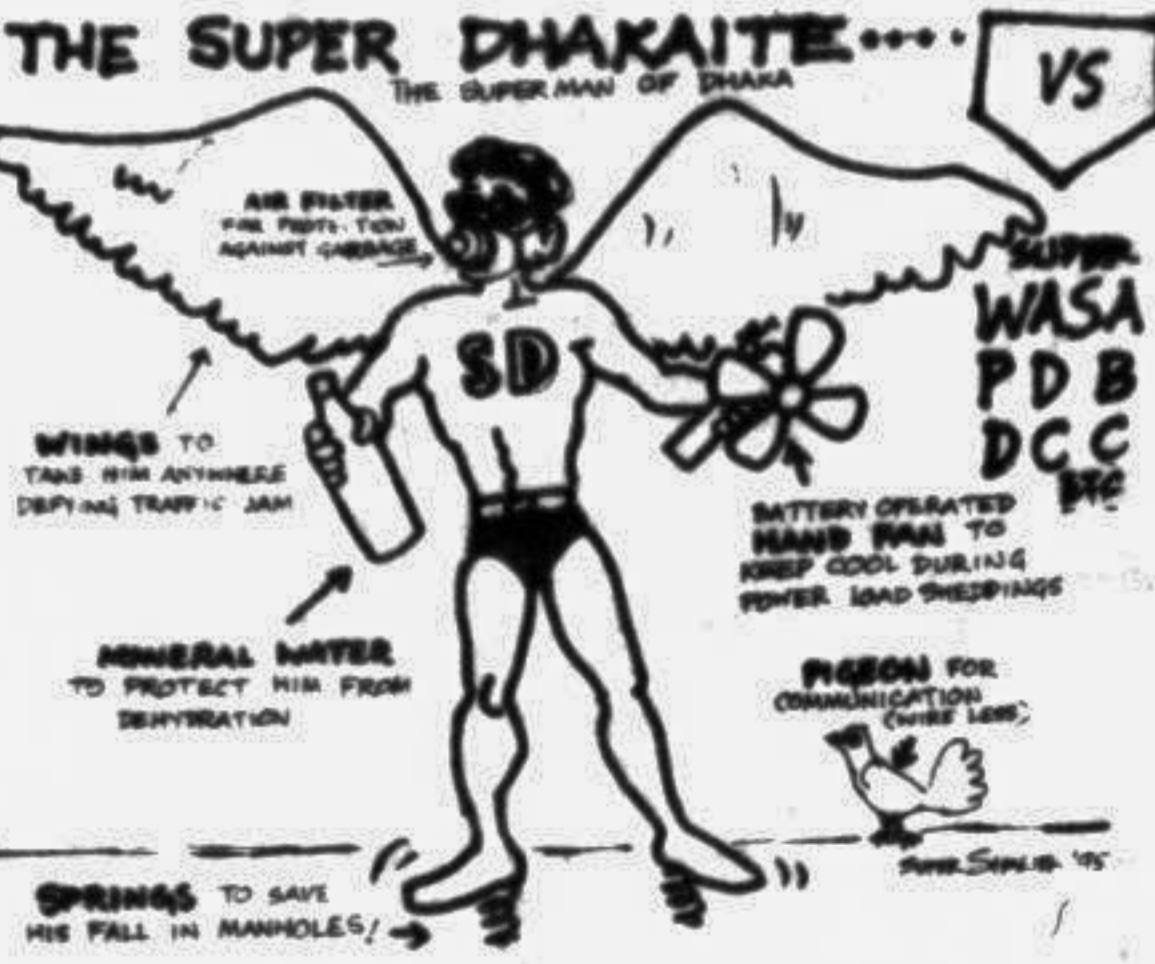
## All in a Day's Work

by Schrezad Joya Monami Latif

A person who recently moved from Manila commented distraughtly at a dinner party that the intense heat, loadshedding and horrendous traffic in the Philippine capital had led her to run away to Dhaka for a few months. Her comment resulted in, not the cries of sympathy from her audience as she had expected, but loud guffaws. Given the current situation in our metropolis, the thought of anyone moving to Dhaka to avoid heat, loadshedding and traffic is a ludicrous one.

There is no question that all three of the woman's motives for leaving Manila have been topics of numerous Dhaka Day by Day's over the years, but one could not resist the urge to write yet another one, this time treating all three topics in one article.

Let us start with the traffic and heat situation in Dhaka. It seems that the city is aping South East Asian traffic nightmares while trying to emulate their industrial feats. Panthopath, a connecting road that links Mirpur road with the old Airport road near Sonargaon road, is not only the latest road but also the latest traffic gridlock area along with infamous Elephant road and Green road. In the morning when most people are in their cars, or on a rickshaw or baby-taxi, trying to get themselves and their children to work and school, it has become a time out of time, almost like an out of body experience. One sits on their mode of transport, with the morning sun screaming down at them; without a breeze in the air and in stationary traffic. The poor children, recently bathed and dusted with aromatic powder, in their starch, squeaky clean grey/white/blue uniforms, only to be bathed half way to school in sweat. The combination of heat and traffic that early in the morning goes straight to one's head — in the form of a pounding headache!



At least one can never say that sitting in traffic at eight in the morning is ever boring. All one has to do is look around them, it is almost like watching television. The impeccably dressed man who industriously picks away at his nose, the little girl whose mother is forcing her to gulp a glass of milk in the car, the teenager who sits in his air-conditioned Toyota, singing along with his stereo and shaking his head to the beat, even the man who preens himself on the rearview mirror fixing his bright polyester tie. Those however, tend to be the only amusing parts of an otherwise awful morning.

While the morning starts out dreadfully, the day, as it wears on becomes even more dreadful, so that by the time lunch time comes around, you are ready for some serious rehydrating saline. Once you get to work, hot and drenched and bothered, the electricity is likely to go off. At least in the evenings when there is loadshedding, you can sit on your verandah and try to imagine a breeze in the air. But in the daytime, at work, when there is a power cut, it can be deadly. Work productivity goes down, below normal because it is too hot to think, work and for many, all their work is in their computer, safe but not accessible without electricity. Is it a preposterous notion, or were there less power cuts during the winter when no one needed a fan? Between the heat, loadshedding and the hartals and aborodhs, one wonders if there is any progress at all, in certain office quarters. But then life always goes on, in spite of it all, a testimony to the city's survival, one supposes. All this is, after all, in a day's work for the Dhakaite. That, however, does not mean we have to stop complaining or dedicating our Dhaka Day by Days to all that ails our city life.

### Preparation for Tongi model polls complete

All necessary preparations have been completed to hold the Tongi model Poursabha election on April 10 as per schedule, reports BSS.

The polling will start at 7 am and continue till 2 pm at 70 polling centres in the town to facilitate 72000 voters to cast their votes smoothly.

Some 70 presiding officers, 293 assistant presiding offi-

cers, 586 polling officers and 70 additional polling officers have been appointed from among the local people to ensure their effective participation in the election process.

Four Chairman and 87 ward commissioner candidates in seven wards are contesting the election. All the candidates and their supporters have committed to follow a 16-point

code of conduct of this model election and in accordance with their pledge the candidates have refrained from publishing posters, bringing out processions and rallies.

The Election Commission has published a joint poster for the publicity of candidates. Besides, joint projection meetings of all the candidates will be held on April 1, 2 and 3.



The newly appointed High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Karam Elahi called on Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan at the latter's residence on Thursday. — Star photo

### South Asian Pharmaceutical Confce begins

## 90 pc of diseases need cheap medicines : B Chowdhury

Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said research of indigenous medicines would be incorporated in future plan to ensure cheaper and effective drugs to the common people, reports UNB.

"Ninety per cent of diseases in the country need cheap and effective medicines for an effective health service," he said.

The physician-cum-politician was inaugurating a two-day South Asian Pharmaceutical Conference organised by Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society (BPS) in collaboration with International Pharmaceutical Federation (IPF).

Prof Chowdhury lamented that nearly 90 per cent of the country's population is deprived of the best available medicines as those are expensive. "They are put to risk because they cannot afford."

He called for evolving a mechanism to ensure production of inexpensive and effective drugs to ensure health for all people.

More than 400 local and foreign pharmacists and representatives of international and national drug control au-

thorities are taking part in the international conference aimed at better interaction for improving the professional service.

The Deputy Leader hoped that the pharmacists attending the conference will be able to formulate ideas of providing people-oriented and preventive drugs. "Real right and direct answers are needed to face the practical situation," he said.

Referring to the potentials of indigenous medicines, Dr. Badruddoza said the participants, particularly the pharmacists of India and Pakistan, should discuss their experiences with scientific views of effective indigenous drugs.

Addressing the inaugural session of the conference the theme "Quality Medicine: Quality Health Care", Deputy Minister for Health M. Sirajul Haque informed that the government is actively considering appointment of pharmacists in every sector of health service.

The involvement of pharmacists is now restricted to the industrial sector only, he pointed out.

Attending President of International Pharmaceutical

Federation (IPF) Prof D. Steinback mentioned the important role of pharmacists in ensuring better health service to the people.

The president of IPF, an apex body of some 300,000 pharmacist representing association from 70 countries, expressed his satisfaction that the pharmacists have started to use drugs in a more professional way.

Representative of World Health Organisation in Bangladesh Dr. Witjaksono Hardjotanojo observed that there has been a significant improvement in quality and production of drugs due to the National Drug Policy.

However, referring to a recent study conducted by the WHO in 13 third world countries, Dr Hardjotanojo said there is still problem in supply of drugs at all levels.

Chaired by BPS President M K Choudhury, the inaugural session was also addressed by the Vice President of the society Anisul Islam.

The first day of the conference includes a seminar on "Hospital Pharmacy" while the second days interinary has a seminar.

### Training on drug identification begins today

A training programme on drug identification, intelligence and seizure for law enforcement officers from the department of narcotics control, Bangladesh Rifles, police and customs begins in the city today, reports BSS.

The two-week basic training course is jointly organised by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the department of narcotics control, Ministry of Home under the master plan for drug abuse control in Bangladesh project.

Thirty law enforcement officers will take part in the training. Participants will learn how to search for, identify and seize illicit drugs and receive briefing on new trafficking routes and techniques and how to prevent movement of drugs into and through Bangladesh.

Two trainers from the IDTPC (International Department for Technical Police Cooperation) in France are leading the training programme.

The master plan for drug abuse control in Bangladesh is a US 1.9 million dollar project to reduce the supply of and demand for illegal drugs such as heroin, phensedyl and cannabis in Bangladesh. It is a joint project of the government of Bangladesh and UNDCP, funded by the European Union.

### Progress of projects reviewed

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications at a meeting here Thursday reviewed the progress of different on-going projects under it, reports UNB.

The review meeting expressed satisfaction at the progress of implementation of six projects of Bangladesh Postal Department and 12 projects of Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board.

The handout said 42 per cent progress was achieved till February last and it was expected that 95 per cent achievement would be made by June next.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam who chaired the meeting directed the concerned officials to complete the projects within stipulated time.

### SPGRC welcomes Hillary's visit

The Stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh yesterday welcomed the ensuing visit of American First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC-Ejaz) has invited Mrs Clinton to visit the Pakistani refugee camps during her two-day visit to Bangladesh.

The wife and daughter of the US President William J Clinton are expected to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow as a part of her 12 day tour of the South Asian countries.

The SPGRC has also urged the First Lady to recommend their cause to President Clinton and help in their early repatriation.

### 64 branches of Ansars, VDP bank to be set up

The government is going to set up Ansars VDP Development Bank with an aim to change the lot of Ansars and VDP members, reports UNB.

This was disclosed by Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury while addressing a conference of high-level officers of Ansars and VDP at its headquarters Thursday.

Government will set up branches of this bank in 64 thanas of 64 districts initially as pilot scheme, he added.

The Minister stressed the need for inclusion of more members of VDP to make this organisation strong at its village level, said an official handout.

Home Secretary Azmuddin Ahmed and Director-General of Ansar and VDP Major-General Md Anwarul Kabir Talukder also addressed the conference.

### City dwellers asked not to build unplanned bldgs

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Public Works Ministry has appealed to the city dwellers to abide by the rules and provisions of RAJUK and not to build unauthorised and unplanned structure in the city, reports UNB.

The appeal was made Thursday at the 32nd meeting of the Standing Committee held at the Sangsad Bhavan.

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