

**Dhaka Day by Day**

**Rainy Days are Heaven-sent**

by Rashida Ahmad

The rain in Spain, they say, falls mainly on the plain. But not here. Here, when the rain falls, it falls on plains, trains and automobiles, on hills and in valleys, on fields, and in the rivers; in the city, the village, the town; down your neck and inside your clothes, off the end of your nose, and in your shoes. It doesn't miss much. It's sharp. But it's not very choosy about where it falls. Non-discriminatory, that's the nature of rain.

It never rains, but it pours — never a truer word.

Of course, there are great pleasures attached to a torrential downpour — singing and dancing in the rain, if you're that way inclined; the dash to the roof with soap and shampoo to bathe in the warm, universal, unisex, free-for-all shower; the feeling of cosy solidarity in the office as the power inevitably cuts off, and everyone is suddenly pulled by some mysterious force to a doorway or window, to find themselves just staring out, wordlessly lost in thought, watching the lightning and shuddering with pleasure as the thunder thunders.

Even being stuck in a traffic jam can be a less than usually frustrating experience, as you savour the safety of the body of metal and glass that separates you from the elements. And listen, mesmerised, to the sharp drumming of a thousand waterdrops falling from high up there, where the clouds meet their end and disintegrate to create such havoc down below. For some reason (perhaps connected to the increased gravitational powers of doors and windows) drivers stop their incessant horn-blowing, even when traffic slows to a halt, and road-users actually use the roads with a modicum of care. What a refreshing diversion!

It's also more than a little bit amusing to watch the grimacing faces of those caught on motorcycles, or rickshaws, some of them fighting a losing battle with crazed flapping sheets of plastic, as they get wetter and wetter with no place to go. Rain, rain, go away, come back another day. The best faces, though, are of those soaked to the skin and resigned to

such a fate, blank faces, in a Zen-like trance, seemingly unaware of the cataclysm of water dripping from every bodily projection.

The absolutely best thing about rain here, though, is the brief respite it gives from the heat. The cool fresh breeze brings relief as it breathes the pungently spiced aroma of living, growing vegetation (not such a relief, however, when it bears the scent of dead, rotting, overflowing sewage that floods the street).

Just walk (wade) down the street after a downpour and you feel there's something in the air that gets you high. You can see clearly now the rain has gone. It's suddenly a bright sunny day, but not too hot. Scooter-drivers are washing their 'babes' in the enormous, lake-like puddles lining the roads. Kids are laughing and splashing... Water, water, everywhere. We're all floating, walking on water, gently drifting our separate ways, the world reflected beneath our feet. But, no man is an island. Suddenly, you're drenched by a passing car as it speeds through a great puddle.

The sound of rain falling like cats and dogs (never did understand that particular metaphor) now gone, the sounds of the city return to deafen. Cars honk more insanely than before, making up for the previous reprieve; policemen blow their now dried-out whistles; rickshaws emerge from under great plastic blankets, tinkling their bells to ply their trade once more; workers get back to work, banging away at bricks with hammers, making horrible ear-splitting noises with large pieces of corrugated iron.

The sun gradually heating the rainwater gives rise to an ever-more sticky humidity, making your clothes stick to you, and your hair plaster your forehead. You're well and truly drenched now even if you managed to avoid the rain a short while ago. Yep, it's back to normal, folks. The city recovers from its heaven-sent drenching, shakes itself, dries out, heats up again, and we're all left wishing fervently for the next downpour.



**Madhuda's death anniversary**

By Staff Correspondent

The 24th death anniversary of Madhusudan Dey, popularly known as 'Madhuda', was observed at the Madhur Canteen premises, Dhaka University, yesterday.

He embraced martyrdom during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, addressing a memorial meeting on Madhuda, said that he brought together at his canteen student-politicians of all shades of opinion.

He said the university would celebrate the 75th founding anniversary on July 1. The celebration programme will highlight the Canteen and its founding father Madhuda.

The VC also announced that a research centre on the War of Liberation would be set up in the university soon.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Abdur Razzak MP, K M Obaidur Rahman, Haider Akbar Rano and Morshed Ali.

The meeting over, Prof Emajuddin unveiled a bust of Madhuda in front of the canteen.



Professor Emajuddin Ahmed (C), Vice-Chancellor of the Dhaka University, unveiling a bust of Madhuda in front of the Madhur Canteen at Dhaka University premises yesterday. — Star photo

**Tufail accredited to Ethiopia**

The government has decided to concurrently accredit Tufail K Haider, at present Ambassador of Bangladesh to Cairo, as Ambassador to the transitional government of Ethiopia, said an official source in the city. Sunday reports BSS.

**Certificates of English films cancelled**

The government yesterday cancelled certificates of all English feature films which got certificates between January 1, 1972 and December 31, 1985, a PID handout said. Sunday reports BSS.

**Hafiz tells AALCC meet Int'l laws can protect lower riparian states**

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Gislam Hafiz has called for appropriate international river law to protect the rights of lower riparian countries, reports UNB.

The minister, who is leading the Bangladesh delegation to the 34th session of the Afro-Asian Legal Consultative Committee being held in Doha, was speaking at the first plenary session of the meeting, according to a message received in the city yesterday.

He said that the withdrawal of the Ganges water upstream in total disregard of fundamental and ancient rights of the lower riparian state had threatened Bangladesh with desertification.

It has adversely affected not

only the flora and fauna, but also the lives of over 40 million Bangladeshis, particularly in the northern region, he told the AALCC meeting.

"Surely there is an urgent need for appropriate international rule of law on international rivers in order to protect us and others who are similarly placed," he added.

The Bangladesh law minister hoped that the AALCC would address to this crucial issue for the survival of the Bangladeshis.

"We wish to see the proliferation of such values as those advocated in the UN Charter," he said adding that Bangladesh would continue her endeavours for a global acceptance of these norms in the conduct of international relations.

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