

Dhaka Day by Day

The Diminishing Family

by Gemini Wahhaj

An aunt just successfully married off her four daughters. Now she sits in her silent house, wondering, "What'll happen to me?"

Suddenly, Dhaka's lively houses, resounding with the screaming voices of dozens of un-planned children, are emptying out.

There used to be much loved homes, peopled with playmates, the ringing voices of acrimonious 'Monopoly' games. Running feet on the roof as we plucked guavas and kool, as the seasons demanded. Now these homes stand deserted, gloomy, silent. An aunt or a friend's mother sits at an empty table, chin in hand, surrounded only by a few photographs.

"Do you have children?" a guest asks.

"Yes, yes," replies the proud mother, pushing forward gilded well-dusted photographs. "This is my daughter (she lives in Kuwait), and my son. He is studying computer science in the United States!"

"Ah, you must be so proud," says the gushing guest.

"Yes, yes," replies the mother, wiping away a few tears.

What is the cause of this Dhaka epidemic, the Diminishing Family? Is this the price we must pay for abolishing joint families? Is family planning to blame, or the rising popularity of higher education (abroad)?

Some children have been away for so long that their absence is taken for granted. The youngest of ten children is sometimes the only one left at home.

"So are you an only child?" he's asked.

"No, no," replies his mother, "I have nine more."

These phantom children live not only through photographs, but also through dinner conversations, and sudden trunk calls in the

middle of the night.

"Ah, we're having tomato bharta today," says the father. "Zahed's favourite dish."

"He must be in Physics class now," says the mother. "It is exactly ten in the morning in London."

"Perhaps he's sitting next to his best friend Jason. I wonder if Jason ever got rid of his tooth-ache. Zahed was worried about it in his last letter."

And then, at 3 am, a ghostly call. Furious rings wake up anxious parents. "Halo. Halo. Mantul Mantul! How are you? Are you eating alright? What did you have for breakfast today?"

And the line goes dead.

Sometimes they visit, for a week or two. Their old room (now the family library or onion-storage room) is returned to them, complete with their favourite Einstein poster, and the tennis racket on the wall. The just-in-time room is a growing popularity in Bangladeshi homes.

So what is the solution? Where will our parents go when the last child leaves, when loneliness becomes unbearable, and old age takes away the ability to live alone?

In Singapore already, the government might be about to push laws forcing children to live with their ageing parents. Should we do the same? Or should we start opening old people's homes?

Meanwhile, old couples dust the photographs of their offsprings and go for morning walks, holding on to each other's walking canes.

"Ah, this is the pond where Chandu used to play," they reminisce. "When will we see Chandu again?"



First reunion of Mohsin Hall

By Staff Correspondent

National Professor Innas Ali yesterday stressed the need for a national consensus for development, reports UNB.

"For achieving progress, there is no alternative to unity," he said while addressing as chief guest at the first reunion of Dhaka University's Mohsin Hall at TSC auditorium yesterday.

Prof Innas Ali, the hall's first provost, also urged his former students, who are now in politics, to work for a greater unity in the political arena.

He described the presence of political and student leaders of different parties and opinions at the function as a "symbol of national unity."

A number of politicians, including Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain of ruling BNP, Monirul Huq Chowdhury of Jatiya Party, Mujahidul Islam Selim of CPB and Bahadur Moznun Chunnun of Awami League, attended the functions as former residents of the hall.

The hall was opened on April 22, 1967. Ten students and a house tutor of the hall sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the nation in 1971.

Four killed in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

Four persons were killed in separate road accidents yesterday. An unknown male aged about 50 was killed on the spot when a minibus knocked him down on Mirpur road near Kalabagan Wednesday afternoon. He was crossing the road. In another incident one Shaikh Hossain, 17, was killed under wheels of a minibus near Postagola bridge in the morning.

UNB adds: A rickshaw-van pulled, wounded in a road accident at Gulshan Wednesday night, succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital early yesterday.

Police said Shahjahan, 45, was knocked down by a private car near Kakoli crossing at 10 pm Wednesday.

Another report adds: A minor boy was killed in a road-mishap at Dariadiar in Sadar thana of Pabna district yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Harun-ur-Rashid, 10, son of Sakur Ali of Pirpur in Sadar thana of the district.

Harun was hit by a Nagarbari-bound truck while he was crossing the Pabna-Nagarbari highway at 10 am.

'Opposition ignored'

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition parties yesterday criticised the government for not consulting them regarding the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

Justice A K M Sadeque Wednesday took oath as Chief Election Commissioner.

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman, when contacted, said they had demanded of the government to consult the Opposition in appointing the CEC to avoid controversy.

Jatiya Party president member Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star that he had no comment to make at this stage. He, however, added, "We have not been consulted on the matter."

Jamaat-e-Islami publicity secretary Abdul Qader Mollah said the government had committed "another mistake" by not consulting the opposition parties.

Left Democratic Front leader Rashed Khan Menon said under the present circumstances, the government should discuss the Opposition to find out a person acceptable to all.



A day-long *Baishakhi Mela*, organised by the students of the Sunbeams Tutorial, was held at the school premises in the city yesterday. — Star photo

US embassy clarification on DV-1 visa

Recent press reports indicate that many applicants for DV-1 diversity visas are being misinformed about the programme and its administration. As a result, many people who have received appointment letters from the National Visa Center in the United States are disappointed when they do not receive visas, says a USIS special release.

The US Embassy provides the following information to assist applicants in understanding the diversity visa programme and to correct the misinformation.

The Diversity Visa programme, as established by Congress, has minimum requirements that cannot be waived. The principal applicant must have either: (1) the equivalent of a 12th grade education (an HSC certificate), or (2) within the past five years, two years of work experience or training in an occupation that requires two years experience or training according to standards established by the United States Department of Labour.

Education

The Embassy has been criticised for not issuing visas to every applicant who presents a Higher Secondary School certificate. Unfortunately, many applicants are presenting counterfeit HSC certificates in order to qualify for the programme.

Whenever the interviewing consular officer strongly doubts the authenticity of a certificate, we are required to suspend the processing of the case pending the outcome of an investigation, it added. All DV-1 investigations are conducted on a priority basis, usually within two weeks of the initial interview.

In one recent investigation, eleven suspect certificates were checked, and all eleven proved to be counterfeit.

The presentation of false documents to a consular officer, moreover, is a serious of-

fence. Not only will the visa be denied, but the perpetrator has violated section 212(a) 6(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act and is permanently ineligible to receive a visa, immigrant or nonimmigrant, to the United States.

Work Experience or Training

Many applicants are under the mistaken impression that any prior work experience or training meets the requirements of the DV-1 programme. This is not the case. Only a few specialized occupations meet the standards set by the United States Department of Labour in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

So far, approximately 25 per cent of the applicants appearing for Diversity Visa interviews in Dhaka do not meet the basic requirements for work experience or training outlined above.

Embassy employees screen every DV-1 application prior to the actual interview. If it appears that the individual does not meet the basic requirements of the programme, members of the Embassy staff explain two options: (1) to pay the \$170 per person non-refundable application fee, be interviewed, and be refused, or (2) to withdraw the application and save a considerable amount of money.

Some visa "advisors" are alleging that the Embassy's administration of the DV-1 programme deprives many Bangladeshis of a chance to obtain an immigrant visa to the United States. In fact, it is the misinformation spread by these "advisors" and the profiteering by document counterfeiters that is costing many honest Bangladeshis the opportunity to immigrate.

There are a limited number of DV-1 visas available. The visas are issued to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis worldwide.

Attack on Azmatullah condemned

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami Lawyers' council on Thursday condemned the attack on the life of newly-elected chairman of Tongi Pourashava.

In a joint statement, Advocate Shahara Khatun and Advocate Abdullah Abu, convenor and member secretary respectively of the council also demanded punishment to the attackers.

They said the miscreants raided the house of chairman Azmatullah Khan on the night of April 25. The terrorists were caught red handed.

Appointment

Application are invited for the post of office executive, having degree in science and knowledge in different packages in computer. Last date for submitting application is 4/5/95.

Please contact: **TECHNO ENTERPRISES** HOUSE # 63, ROAD # 7A, DHANMONDI, DHAKA.

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D-427

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Local Government Engineering Directorate
Hobiganj
Memo No LGED/EE/Habi/95/907 Dated : 19-04-95

Tender Notice No 26/1994-95

Tenders in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are hereby invited from contractors of LGED enlisted special class & having pre-qualification for all projects of LGED for the project 'Sub structure' construction to install portable steel bridge to be procured on Japanese grant during 1994-95 under Local Government Engineering Directorate.

- Contractors experienced in pile foundation bridge construction (in case of SI No 1, cast in situ pile & in case of SI No 2, precast pile), only can participate in this tender.
- Tender documents can be purchased at the prescribed price in cash (non-refundable) from the office of the undersigned; Executive Engineer, LGED, Dist-Sylhet/Moulvibazar/Sunamganj; Superintendent Engineer (Maintenance), Local Government Engineering Directorate, 5/7 Lalmita, Block-B, Dhaka-1207 & all Thana Engineers' offices in this district up to 7-5-95 during office hours on production of renewed licence register.
- Tender documents will be received in the Tender Box kept at the above offices up to 1-00 pm of 8-5-95 and the tenders will be opened on the same day at 1-15 minutes before the tenderers (if any) present.
- Itemwise rate should be quoted against each item in figures & words. Tender without itemwise rate will be treated as outright cancelled.
- Correct analysis for each item in support of the quoted rate should be enclosed with the tender. If the rate analysis for each item is not found appropriate to the authority, then the tender will not be acceptable. Tenders without rate analysis will be treated as outright cancelled.
- 2.5% of the quoted value should be submitted as earnest money through Bank Draft/Pay Order at the time of submitting tender.
- Work schedule for each work should be submitted with the tender. Tender without work schedule will be treated as cancelled.
- Govt decisions regarding realisation of Income Tax & VAT will be effective.
- Tender submitted is Bangladesh Form No 2911 will be treated as first & formal tender. But, in case of negotiated rate work order will be given on execution of formal tender.
- Under no circumstance tender should be submitted quoting rate in percentage above or below the estimated cost.
- Other terms & conditions can be known from the office of the undersigned during office hours.
- The authority reserves the right to reject all the tenders or accept any tender without assigning any reason.

| SI No | Name of Project | Price of schedule | Class of contractor | Time limit |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 01. | Construction of sub structure to install 65.00 m span portable steel bridge on Baniachong-Sujatpur road under Baniachong thana of Hobiganj district. (Code No 04-01-01) 5272 m in chainage. | 1000/- | Contractors special class and having all types of prequalification of LGED | 6 months |
| 02. | Construction of sub structure to install 75.00 m span portable steel bridge on Nabiganj-Imatganj Road under Nabiganj thana of Habiganj district. 7377 m in chainage. | | | |

Md Khalilur Rahman
Executive Engineer
LGED, Habiganj
DFP-10192-2/4
G-673

Mohiuddin laid to rest

Noted journalist and a founder member of the Jatiya Press Club, AMG Mohiuddin, was buried yesterday at the intellectual graveyard at Mirpur, reports BSS.

The namaz-e-janaza of Mohiuddin, who expired on April 23, was first held at the Press Club and then at the Baitul Mukarram mosque. His body was kept at the BIRDEM Hospital to facilitate his sons staying abroad to return home for the funeral.

Mohiuddin, who died at the age of 76 after prolonged illness, served in different dailies including the Azad, the Pakistan Observer and the Paigam in various capacities and finally retired as manager public relations of BJMC.

Mohiuddin, who was the eldest son of late Abul Hossain of Chandpur left behind two sons, three daughters and a host of well-wishers.

ESCAP session

Development of the Asian and the Pacific region will increasingly become dependent on its effective use of human resources, reports UNB.

This was stated in a UN report being discussed at the 51st session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok on Tuesday.

Muktijoddha Sanghati body meets

By Staff Correspondent

Chairman of the Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad and Awami League leader Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali has called upon the freedom fighters to remain united to establish the ideals of the Liberation War.

He was addressing a workers' meeting of the parishad as chief guest at the Jannat Academy of Mirpur in the city Thursday evening.

Weather

Thundershower likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Chittagong division and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office says weather is likely to remain dry elsewhere across the country.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period over the country.

Country's highest temperature 41.0 degrees Celsius was recorded at Ishurdi and the lowest 19.0 degrees at Sylhet.

The sun sets today at 6:26 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:26 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday are:

| City/Town | Temperature in Celsius | | Humidity in percentage | |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
| | max | min | morning | evening |
| Dhaka | 37.4 | 27.5 | 73 | 59 |
| Chittagong | 33.0 | 25.7 | 69 | 75 |
| Rajshahi | 39.6 | 23.6 | 78 | 44 |
| Khulna | 36.6 | 27.1 | 72 | 67 |
| Barisal | 35.6 | 27.0 | 77 | 77 |
| Sylhet | 31.2 | 19.0 | 79 | 68 |
| Cox's Bazar | 34.0 | 25.6 | 86 | 74 |
| Faridpur, | 38.5 | 26.1 | 80 | 51 |
| Jessore | 39.3 | 26.4 | | |

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Directorate
Office of the Executive Engineer
Bagerhat
LGED Tender Notice No. 39/94-95

Tenders under sealed cover in Bangladesh Form No. 2911 through itemwise rate quoting are hereby invited from contractors/contractor firms as stated below for implementation of the undermentioned work of Local Government Engineering Directorate, Bagerhat during 1994-95 financial year.

Detailed description of work

| Gr No | Name of work | Head | Earnest money | Price of schedule | Time limit for completion of work | Class of contractor |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Rehabilitation with ASS Ranbijoypur-Patara Road via Sunderghona Road under Bagerhat Sadar thana | | At the rate 2.5% (two point five zero per cent) of the quoted rate | 300/- | 60 days | LGED enlisted all class of contractors (as per class eligibility), contractors having prequalification for all projects. |

Detailed description of tender:

- For the above work tender can be purchased at prescribed price (non-refundable) from the Office of the Superintending Engineer (Maintenance), LGED, 4/5, Lalmita, Block-B, Dhaka-1207; Executive Engineer, LGED, Khulna/Satkhira & Office of the Thana Engineer concerned including the office of the undersigned, and will be received in the tender box kept at the said offices on the prescribed date.
- Last date of purchasing tender schedule : 07-05-95 (24-01-1402 BS) up to office hours.
- Date & time of submitting the tender: 08-05-95 (25-01-1402 BS) up to 1-00 PM.
- Date & time of opening tender: 08-05-95 (25-01-1402 BS) at 1-30 PM.
- Work schedule stating the time for each phase of execution of work should be submitted with the tender. Tender submitted without the work schedule will be treated as cancelled outright.
- Itemwise rate with rate analysis in the form attached with the tender schedule should be quoted (in words & figures).
- True copy of VAT & Income Tax registration should be enclosed with the tender, otherwise tender will be treated as cancelled.
- If work is not begun within 7 (seven) days of issuing work order, then the work order will be treated as outright cancelled with forfeiture of the contractor's earnest money.
- Interested contractors may know about other necessary matters and terms & conditions from the office of the undersigned during office hours.
- Advance earnest money at the rate 2.5% of the quoted rate in the form of Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank should be deposited with the tender. Tenders submitted without the said amount of earnest money will be treated as outright cancelled.
- Additional terms & conditions will be treated as part of the tender.
- The undersigned reserves the right to reject or accept any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Executive Engineer
Local Govt Engineering Directorate
Bagerhat
DFP-10104-22/4
G-669