

Metropolitan

**Dhaka Day by Day**

**The Fashion Fascists**

by Naomi T Hossain

Commentators have noted the recent alarming trend towards the rise of fashion fascism in Dhaka city. Every morning, there are young women throughout the city getting dressed in terror, each one secretly worrying constantly that she will be caught, that she will have got it wrong.

The crime of getting it wrong can have serious repercussions: one woman was attacked publicly by a colleague for wearing a beige dupatta with a green kameez. "It doesn't go," stated the attacker. "You cannot possibly wear green and brown together. What are you, a tree?" "I was in a hurry this morning," said the perpetrator of this crime against fashion, hoping in vain that she would be forgiven.

"You should get up earlier." The verdict was given, and our poor hapless criminal, having offended against immutable Dhaka fashion laws, was sentenced to two weeks of wearing chikon shalwar kameezes in different shades of pink. One of the most stringent rules of the fashion police is the mandatory wearing of much make up, whether or not it is 40 degrees in the shade. "You've gone so dark, how can you possibly go out in the sun?" is an interrogation faced by many a sporty female. The convenient discovery of a mysterious disease involving an allergy to the sun, found only among upper class Bangladeshi women, removes the possibility that any of them will have actual contact with the outdoors, and those who do are swathed in enough foundation and blusher for a gaggle of drag queens. Never mind that your face has long since cracked and your carefully applied blue eyeshadow (to match your blue handbag and shoes) has left similarly blue smudges where perspiration has done the inevitable. If you don't make an effort the fashion police will get you,

and then you'll be sorry that you wore the same grey kurta that you had on only last year. "That's last season" is condemnation enough to make you reach for your co-ordinated earrings and necklace set from Chandni Chawk in penitence.

"Making an effort" is the main thrust of the fashion fascists' four point programme for Dhaka city:

1. Dress up every day whether or not it is appropriate. Cotton is only allowed if it is very hot, otherwise it must be silk, chiffon or georgette.

2. Match every item and every accessory. If your sandals are orange with a green bow, so should your handbag be. Earrings should coordinate as far as possible, although gold or diamonds are also acceptable. No, of course you cannot wear silver. I'm surprised you even asked.

3. Never, ever, repeat an outfit. This is an absolute.

4. Have long straight hair, whether you do or not. (Then cut a fringe into it and spend the rest of your time growing it out and trying to disguise it.)

One point the fashion fascists would like to make clear is that there can be no "interpretation" of "making an effort". It is not subjective. There is only one aesthetic, and if you don't look like it, you are clearly just not trying hard enough.

It is important to point out that as with all fascist regimes there can be no individuality and everyone must look and behave the same. Those guilty of the heresy of claiming to have a different aesthetic will be brought up before the fashion police, where they will tremble in their non-standard deviant clothing and sensible footwear and wish they had paid more attention to Femina while they had the chance.



**Greater role of media in protecting HR stressed**

Charles H Norchi, the visiting executive director of the International League for Human Rights, New York, yesterday stressed the need for more concerted role of the media in protecting human rights, reports BSS.

In a lecture-discussion session at the National Press Club in the city yesterday, Norchi, who is also a senior journalist of the United States, discussed elaborately the situation of human rights specially in the post-Cold War era.

He said that media all over the world project human rights abuse and also face hazards while covering the events. Explaining the situation in some of the African countries including Algeria and Afghanistan, and in Kashmir and Sri Lanka, Norchi remarked that in all these places media's role in exposing human rights violation is vital.

He also explained the situation during the pre-cold War era, saying that although situations have changed to great extent, the media must perform its due role. Norchi explained his own experience in this regard as he has been a frequent visitor to Afghanistan and the region since 1980 and has conducted human rights fact-finding missions in Africa and Central America.

Answering questions on human rights violations in Kashmir and Sri Lanka, he expressed his concern over violations and advocated crucial roles of the media in detecting the violations from any side. The executive director of the International League for Human Rights also refuted a contention that the western media was virtually supporting their government's views in projecting violation of human rights in Kashmir.

Norchi also admitted that the unconditional release of Aung Sun Sun Kyi of Myanmar was an achievement of South Asian journalists.

National Press Club president and general secretary Reazuddin Ahmed

**Two killed, one commits suicide**

By DMCH Correspondent

Two persons were killed and a woman reportedly committed suicide in separate incidents in and around the city yesterday.

Khorshed Alam, 23, who received fatal injuries in a road accident on Biswa Road in Rampura Monday afternoon succumbed at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital early hours yesterday.

One Begum Alimunnessa, 30, reportedly committed suicide at her residence at South Badda in the morning. Gulshan police recovered the body of Alimunnessa and sent it to the DMCH for autopsy.

In another incident, one Sufta Akhter, 14, was electrocuted at Nimrick, Savar yesterday morning.

and Khandaker Mumtaz Alam and USIS information officer Chathlen T Rochester were present in the session.

**Visits BCDJC**

Our Staff Correspondent adds: The executive director of US-based International League for Human Rights Charles H Norchi visited the Green Road office of the Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) yesterday afternoon.

During a brief discussion with the members of BCDJC and journalists, Norchi who is also Associate Editor of the Crosslines magazine stressed on the need for more media coverage of humanitarian issues.

BCDJC executive director Nayemul Islam Khan, Assistant Professor of Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University Dr Subrata Shankar Dhar, journalist Salim Samad were present among others, while Charles H Norchi was accompanied by the USIS Information Officer.

**AP's phone connection snapped**

A telephone connection at Dhaka office of American news agency, Associated Press (AP), has been cut, even though the bills are paid up-to-date, reports UNB.

The telephone—833717—went mute on Saturday disrupting the agency's news and photo transmission for past four days.

The line was dead until late last night, hours after the Revenue Department and the office of the Magbazar area's Divisional Engineer said they ordered the Switch Room to restore the telephone.

**More relief for flood-hit people**

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has sanctioned yesterday more relief goods for the flood affected people of Manikganj, Madaripur, Pabna and Chittagong districts, reports BSS.

The sanctions given yesterday are as follows: Manikganj—rice 250 metric tons (MT), Tk two lakh and biscuit 400 tins, Madaripur—rice 100MT, Tk 50 thousand and biscuit 200 tins, Pabna—wheat 50 MT and Tk 50 thousand and Chittagong—wheat 50MT.

So far sanctions given for the 25 flood affected districts stood at: wheat 4007 MT, rice 2975 MT, Tk 38 lakh 75 thousand, house building grant 43 lakh, saree 9700 pieces, lungi 9700 pieces, biscuit 6200 tins, bloc allotment of wheat 1000 MT and Tk 9 lakh 50 thousand.

**Women's Day rally in Rajshahi**

RAJSHAHI, July 11: A colourful rally in observance of the World Women's Day '95 was brought out in the city today, reports BSS.

The rally was led by city Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu. Officials and representatives from different government, non-government offices with colourful banners, festoons and placards took part in the rally. It was started from city corporation premises and ended at FWVTI auditorium after parading the main city streets.

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**BARD annual confce today**

The two-day annual planning conference for the year 1995-96 of Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Comilla will begin at the academy campus today, says a press release.

Md Mahe Alam, secretary, Rural Development and Cooperatives will inaugurate the conference as the chief guest and Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, DG, BARD will chair the inaugural session.

Some 50 participants from different government and non-government organisations will participate in the conference.

**Weather**

**More rainfall likely**

Moderately heavy rain fall may occur at places over Chittagong division during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Weathermen forecast that moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Chittagong division and at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions during the period.

Met Office said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

However, Patuakhali experienced 32 mm rainfall, Cox's Bazar 11 mm, Sylhet 19 mm, Fequi 24 mm, Dhaka 20 mm, Mymensingh 19 mm, Tangail 13 mm, Jessore 9 mm and Dinajpur 3 mm during the last 12 hours ending 6 pm yesterday.

The country's highest temperature was recorded 32.6 degrees Celsius at Rangpur and the lowest 24.6 degrees at Rangamati.

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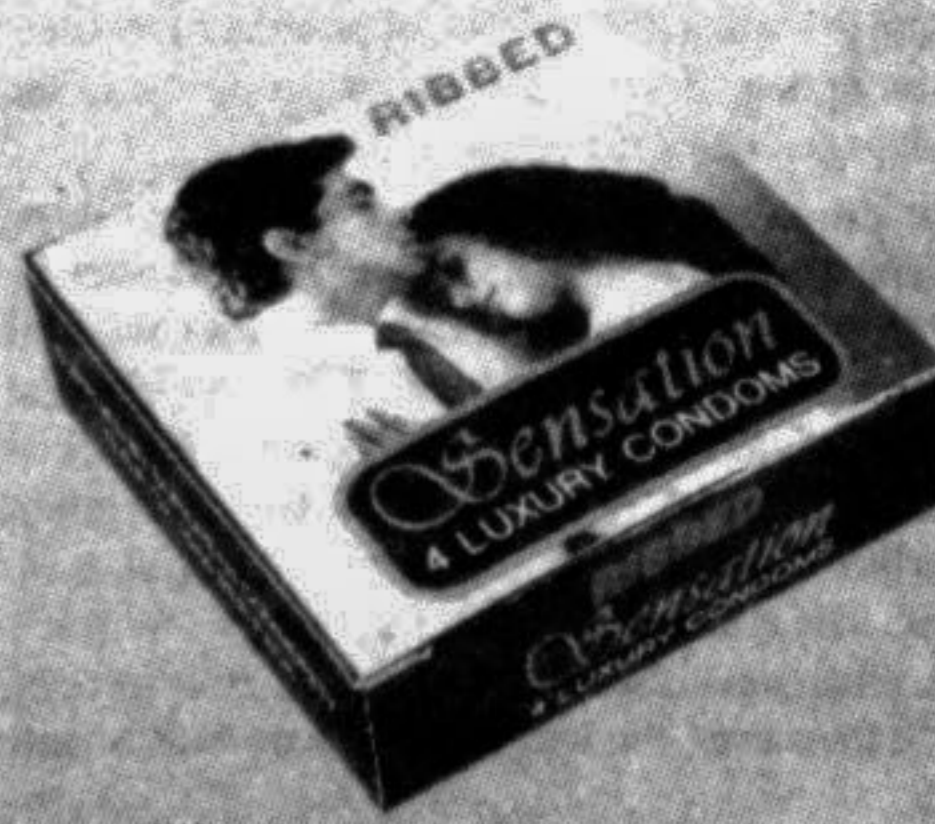
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