

Dhaka Day by Day

A New Kind of Gathering

by Muneera



Waiting for their children: The breathing space, wanted

Crowds and jams have now become so much a part of our life, and especially of this city that it doesn't surprise anyone anymore. One particular type of crowd is, however, quite extra-ordinary and attracts the eyes in front of most of the established schools in Dhaka. Of course, we are not talking of the rush-hour crowds in the morning or the chaos and confusion when school ends for the day. There is a certain crowd which lingers on for a few hours between the starting of the school and the last bell. This is a very colourful crowd, composed mainly of middle-aged women and some younger ones. Most of these ladies stay on because their children are in the very junior classes (play group, etc.) and have classes for only a few hours, so instead of returning home, they wait around these few hours. They stand in groups and clusters, jovially chatting with each other.

The ladies, perhaps have no work to do at home, though at this age where one can hardly find a moment to spare, it seems rather surprising. What goes on at these gatherings — which has become a good part of their social life — is anyone's guess. The ladies are well-dressed — often overdressed — and pass their time in an array of activities. Gossips such as: "whose daughter is

getting married to whom" and "who's getting a divorce" or "those who have eligible daughters and sons" are quite common.

Some ladies are seen carrying tiffin-boxes not for their children, but to share with the others. Ladies come laden with plates and forks and spoons as they bring *biryani* or *tehari* for each other, by a rotational basis. Dresses and sarees are bought and sold and the performances of the "teachers" at their school, discussed. Thus a few hours are whiled away in fun, frolic and laughter. Noticeable are some men, who too hang around for a few hours, at least. It's a wonder how they fit in a few hours of complete idle-time into their routines — perhaps they have nothing better to do.

Whatever they do, they can be seen waiting outside the gates of schools, like Dhanmondi Government Boys' High School, Maple Leaf International School, Oxford International School, Dhanmondi Int School etc, to mention a few. Some schools even provide seating arrangements by setting benches outside on the footpath, some even screening the sitting area with drapes.

In the past, mothers never did not wait for their wards outside the schools — simply because they couldn't spare their time. But time's change. Perhaps these new social gatherings are here to stay.



Members of Lions Club International, clad in traditional attire, brought out a rally to mark the Lions Service Week '95 in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Rhone-Poulenc to buy Fisons shares

Rhone-Poulenc Rorer (RPR), a Paris-based multinational pharmaceutical company, has made its offer to buy shares to gain control of the British pharmaceutical company Fisons plc.

According to a press release available to UNB, the French pharmaceutical company yesterday announced its final offer for Fisons plc of 265 pence per share.

Rhone-Poulenc Rorer's offer values Fisons at 1.8 billion pound sterling (2.9 billion US dollar). At this price the acquisition is expected to add to RPR's earnings by 1997.

"This final cash offer should be compared with what we believe are Fison's poor prospects as an independent company," said Michel de Rosen, president and chief executive officer of Rhone-Poulenc Rorer Inc.

He continued: It is clearer than ever that the key to this transaction is the value that can be realised only by fully combining the two companies.

RPR has been successful with its steroid-based asthma

and allergy products, which it sells in US combined with Fisons. RPR believes it will be in a position to build a strong global respiratory franchise, said de Rosen.

RPR is a global pharmaceutical company dedicated to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of innovative human pharmaceuticals. The company reported sales of 4.5 billion US dollars in 1994 and invested more than 600 million dollars in research and development, the press release said.

New college in city

By Staff Correspondent

A new college begins functioning in the city yesterday. The Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University Prof Emajuddin Ahmed formally inaugurated the Dhaka Imperial College situated on the Mirpur Road.

President of the Jatiya Press Club and Chief Editor of The Financial Express Reazuddin Ahmed also attended the inaugural function held at the college premises with its Principal Prof Latifur Rahman in the chair.

The Vice Principal of the new college Mahfuzul Haq and the governing body president Al-haj M A Malek also spoke on the occasion, says a press release.

Mostafiz, Pranab talk latest dev in SAPTA

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Wednesday called on Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman in New York, reports BSS.

During the meeting, they discussed issues of the SAARC interest and also exchanged views on the latest development in SAPTA, a message received from New York said.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister apprised his Indian counterpart that Bangladesh recently ratified the South Asian Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA).

SAPTA aiming to boost economic cooperation among the seven member countries of SAARC is due to come into operation on December 8 this year, the message said.



Children trying their hands at an art competition held at the Institute of Fine Arts in the city yesterday. The Bangladesh-China Maitri Kendra organised the competition on the occasion of the 46th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China. — Star photo

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Weather

Thundershower likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershower with temporary gusty wind may occur at a few places over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka division in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office says dry weather is likely over Khulna and Rajshahi divisions.

No appreciable change in day temperature is expected over the country.

In its outlook for subsequent two days Met Office forecast improved weather. Giving extended outlook for another five days weathermen says that monsoon may retreat from the country.

Meantime, Barisal experienced the highest 40 mm rain yesterday.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Chuadanga and the lowest 21.2 degrees at Dinajpur.

Sun sets today at 5:40 pm and rise tomorrow at 5:53 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	max	min	morning	evening
Dhaka	33.0	25.6	73	85
Chittagong	29.0	24.5	95	88
Rajshahi	32.8	25.4	85	81
Khulna	33.6	24.4	77	78
Barisal	29.0	23.2	89	85
Sylhet	32.8	24.3	—	78
Cox's Bazar	30.5	25.2	80	80

Members of the executive committee of the Gregorian Association pose for photograph at a function organised to celebrate the 10-yr anniversary of the association recently

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TRADE MARK REGD.

JOIN THE COCA-COLA SPELL CONTEST
DRINK COCA-COLA, SPRITE & FANTA
WIN YO-YO, FOOTBALL, FRISBEE & 6 MARUTI CARS

HOW TO WIN YO-YO, FRISBEE & FOOTBALL:
Collect the letters from under the crown of 250 ml. bottles and set the letters together to make any of the words *Coca-Cola*, *Sprite* and *Fanta*. Then deposit the crowns to your nearest distributor and collect the specified prize and a winner crown.

HOW TO WIN A CAR:
Keep all the winner crowns with you safely till the end of the contest. Closing date of the contest will be announced later in the leading newspapers. After closing of the contest, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd highest collectors of winner crowns will receive a Maruti Car.

Out of the total 6 Cars, Tabani Beverage Co. will distribute 3 cars and K. Rahman & Co. 3 cars in their respective sales area.

RULES: 1. This contest is valid for individual participation only. 2. The decision taken by the Coca-Cola nominated Judge will be final. 3. The employees of Tabani Beverage Co., K. Rahman & Co. and the advertising agency Unirent Ltd. are not allowed to participate in this contest.

TOTAL PRIZES	
YO-YO	75,000
FOOTBALL	5,000
FRISBEE	50,000
MARUTI CAR (800 CC)	6