

Dhaka Day by Day

No Qualms about Dirt

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

Our beloved capital might be known as the city of rickshaws and traffic jams, but it can also win another title — 'the city of dirt'. No doubt the situation is quite the same in most Third World cities. Yet, that's little consolation. Especially when the sad fact is we, the citizens, contribute to half the filth. Whatever traits the Dhakaites may have, cleanliness is one on which their record is unenviable. Surely we are conscious enough to keep our dwellings spick and span, but that's what it ends. In the streets and public places, we have no compunction whatsoever about throwing around garbage. Littering it seems, is like a second nature to us akin to breathing in and breathing out. A staunch environmentalist mused that perhaps some misguided notion has led us local folks in to believing that since air pollution is already on an inexorable drive to wreak havoc to the city scape and cause health hazards, why worry about aesthetic details like keeping the city clean? In any case the Dhakaites have far more serious matters to dwell on than lose sleep over the decaying, grimy metropolis. Hence, Dhaka gets dirtier day by day. The city's infamous toxic smog, the overflowing stinking garbage disposals, the dangerous manholes with open lids and of course the shabby, dusty roads, and sidewalks create an eyesore which even the most ardent patriot would find tough to appreciate.

It would be so easy to put the blame on the municipal corporation's shoulders, but it can only do so much. At the end of the day it picks up waste from all the designated spots. What about the mess scattered throughout the city? To gather dirt from every nook and cranny of the metropolis and tying it up, would not only be a mammoth task but also a virtually impossible one.

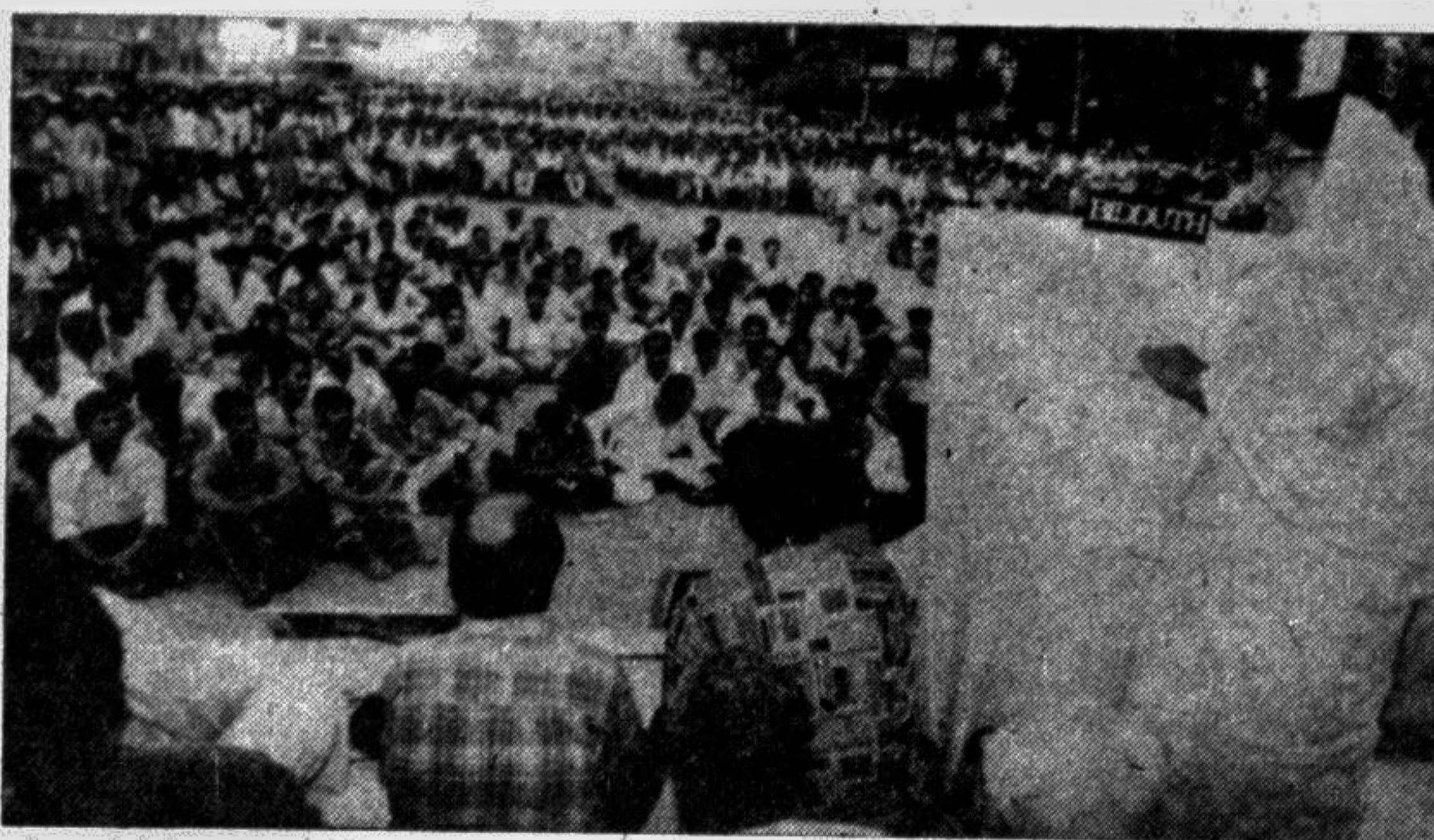
Most of us have no hang-up about disposing used stuff anywhere at all. Very few think before getting rid of paper soda glasses, cans,

candy wrappers, packets of chips and biscuits, crumpled tissue paper, polythene and brown paper bags from car windows or as they walk along the pavements. It would've been understandable if only the ignorant and the illiterate were the guilty party. The middle and upper class people with proper education and social training are just as irresponsible. The worse part is, we do it with nonchalance. Now here lies the hypocrisy. We are ever ready to give smart speeches on health, hygiene and environment awareness. It would've done a world of good if we could just spare the pretentious rhetoric and practice what we preach.

Then, of course the Dhaka dwellers believe it's perfectly natural to spit and clear their noses in the streets. So what if it's unhygienic, it's still a common practice here. There is also no law against throwing away any kind of used product out of your home windows in this city. Surprised? Well, don't be! In certain tacky or supposedly posh apartment blocs tenants use the sunshades as trash cans. A sweeper of a certain neighbourhood says he finds miscellaneous items like — old toys, tattered clothing, junk food wrappers, shampoo bottles, ball point pens and other non-bio degradable stuff every time he cleans up the grounds.

As for graffiti mania, what can one really say in a few words? The hackneyed political slogans adorning the already lacklustre walls are obviously no one's headache. Then again, that's another story altogether.

Ignoring the rampant 'dirt disease' won't make it go away. We have endured it for too long anyway. Our indifference is perhaps due to the fact that we are so used to seeing Dhaka the way it is. A change is definitely anticipated. Awareness, is the first step towards improvement. Dhaka would really be a much cleaner and healthier city if only we litterbugs would think twice of our actions.



Awami League presidium member Sajeda Chowdhury addressing a rally organised by the Jay Bangla Sangskritik Oikkyo Jote at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. — Star photo

Call to ban use of religion in polls campaign

The leaders of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad yesterday urged Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman to ban the use of religion in future election campaigns, reports BSS.

The leaders put forward this suggestion to the Chief Adviser when they called on him at his office in the city. They also recommended barring the bank-loan defaulters from taking part in the elections. They also underlined the need for improving the law and order and correcting the existing voters, list for the sake of holding free and fair elections.

The Parishad's leaders congratulated the Chief Adviser on his assumption of office of the head of the caretaker government.

The Parishad's general secretary Ayesha Khanam led the delegation which included Selina Khaled, Chitra Bhat-tacharjee, Munira Khan, Bela Nabf, Khaleda Mahbub, Nargis Jahir, Rina Helal and Rekha Chowdhury.

Woman gets life term for child trafficking

A court here yesterday convicted a woman and sentenced her to life term imprisonment for trafficking children, reports UNB.

The accused was identified as Rabeya Begum 35, of Demra. According to prosecution, Rabeya tried to traffic two children — Jamal, 6, and Monwar, 7, kidnapped from Habiganj to Dubai. Police rescued the children from her residence near Matuli graveyard in Demra on October 28, 1995.

Later, a case was filed with Demra police in this connection. Special Tribunal Judge Mohammad Abdus Salam pronounced the judgement after examining two witnesses.

Urs

The urs sharif of Hazrat Shah Sufi Amanat Khan (Ra) will be held on April 19 (Friday) at the Darbar Sharif at Amanat Shah Road, Chittagong. Milad, zikir and tilawat-e-Quran pak will be held on the occasion, reports BSS.

JCD reiterates call for DUCSU polls

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday urged the Dhaka University authorities to declare the date of DUCSU election immediately, reports BSS.

JCD leaders were speaking at a rally held at the Aparajeo Bangla, organised by its Dhaka University unit. They urged the Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) to participate in the DUCSU election to show respect to the democratic norms and values.

JCD central vice president Maniruzzaman Manir, joint secretary Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anny, party leader Shafiqur Rahman Sahik, ABM Mosharrar Hossain, Nasiruddin Ashim and Zakir Ahmed Bablu addressed the rally.

Post offices closed Apr 14

Post Offices throughout the country will remain closed on April 14 on the occasion of the Bengali new year, reports BSS.

Milad mahfil

A milad mahfil was held at the head office of the United Commercial Bank on the occasion of the third death anniversary of Humayun Zahir who was the vice chairman and one of the directors of the bank, says a press release.



M A Yussouf Khan, President and Managing Director, Jahangir Alam Khan, Director, KC Rezaul Huq and Hamidul Huq, Deputy Managing Directors were present.

M A Haq's qul today

The qulkiwani of former minister MA Haq will be held after Asar prayers at his residence at Sylhet House, 12 Avoy Das Lane, Tikatuli in the city, says a press release.

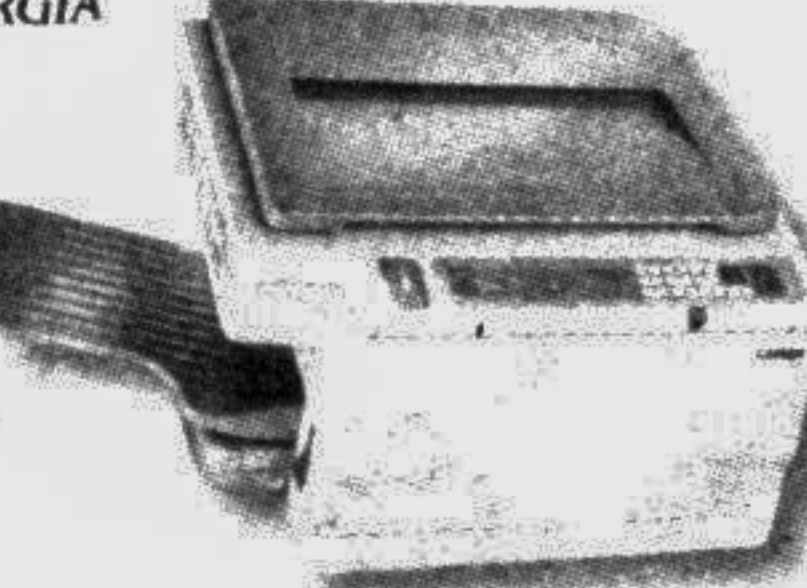
All his friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend.

Haq died of old age ailment on Saturday.



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What's on today

Film show: Russian film 'Vanguard' by A Simonov will be screened. Rainbow Film Society, Bangladesh Film Society and International Film Critic Association have jointly organised the film session. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre auditorium. Time: 6 pm.

DRU meeting: Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) will hold special executive committee meeting. Venue: Jatiya Press Club. Time: 5 pm.

Discussion on Islam: University Readers Forum has arranged a discussion meeting on 'Western Perspective on Islam and Muslim in the Contemporary World'. Dr Selim Mansur of University of Western Ontario, Canada will conduct the seminar. Venue: Iranian Cultural Centre auditorium. Time: 6:30 pm.

Drama show: A Shomoy production 'Ekatturer Khudram' written by Mannan Hira and directed by Pizush Bondapadhyaya will be staged. Venue: Mahila Samity auditorium. Time: 7 pm.

Rotary Club of Dhaka New City: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Sonargaon hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Motijheel: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Purbani hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

Mastarda Surya Sen Parishad: An emergency meeting of the parishad will be held. Venue: Chittagong Samity Bhavan, 32 Topkhana Road. Time: 5 pm.

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Probe corruption by BNP govt: BCL

By DU Correspondent

The Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of Bangladesh Awami League yesterday demanded probe into alleged corruption by the former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, her family members, party colleagues and Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal leaders.

Addressing a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday morning Enamul Haq Shamim, the BCL president said that the people of Bangladesh had launched the movement not only to oust the BNP government but also to protest against its corruption.

Shamim urged the caretaker government to arrest those BNP leaders involved in corruption scandal.

Ishaque Ali Khan Panna, the general secretary of BCL said that the caretaker government was installed to conduct a fair and free national election. But with arms in the hands of the terrorists of BNP fair polls could not be held, he said. He urged the members of law enforcing agencies to speed up the arms recovery drive.

JU admission schedule

Jahangirnagar University authorities have announced the time schedule for collecting forms and prospectus for admission in the 1st year (Hons) classes of 1995-96 session, reports UNB.

Admission forms and prospectus will be available at Agrani Bank's branches at New Market, Green Road, Farmgate, WASA (Kawran Bazar), Bangabandhu Avenue, WAPDA (Motijheel) and Mirpur Section-1 from April 20 to 25 and from May 6 to 10 at fixed price.

The forms and prospectus will also be available at Agrani Bank Jahangirnagar University branch from April 20 to 25 and from May 6 to 10 at fixed price.

Weather

Temperature may rise

The hotspell now sweeping across the country further aggravated yesterday with the rise of temperature almost everywhere, reports UNB.

Rajshahi experienced the country's highest temperature 41.5 degree Celsius, the highest in this summer. On Sunday, Rajshahi was also hottest place in the country with 38.5 degree Celsius.

Met Office Director Mir Fakhrul Quaiyum told UNB last night that the persisting hotspell is likely to continue for another week.

The temperature may fall after an expected thunderstorm within the next seven days, he said.

Met Office forecast for the next 12 hours till 6 pm today predicted rain or thundershower accompanied by gusty or squally wind at one or two places over Sylhet division and the regions of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Tangail, Comilla and Noakhali.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere across the country.

Day temperature is likely to rise by 1-2 degree Celsius throughout the country.

In its outlook for subsequent two days Met Office predicted little change. Giving extended outlook for another five days weathermen forecast rise in day temperature.

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	37.2	25.4	69	53
Chittagong	32.8	21.8	80	68
Rajshahi	41.5	23.8	68	25
Khulna	38.4	24.9	71	58

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