

Dhaka Day by Day

What's in a Date?

by Anushe A Khan



Women prove their awareness.

— Star photo

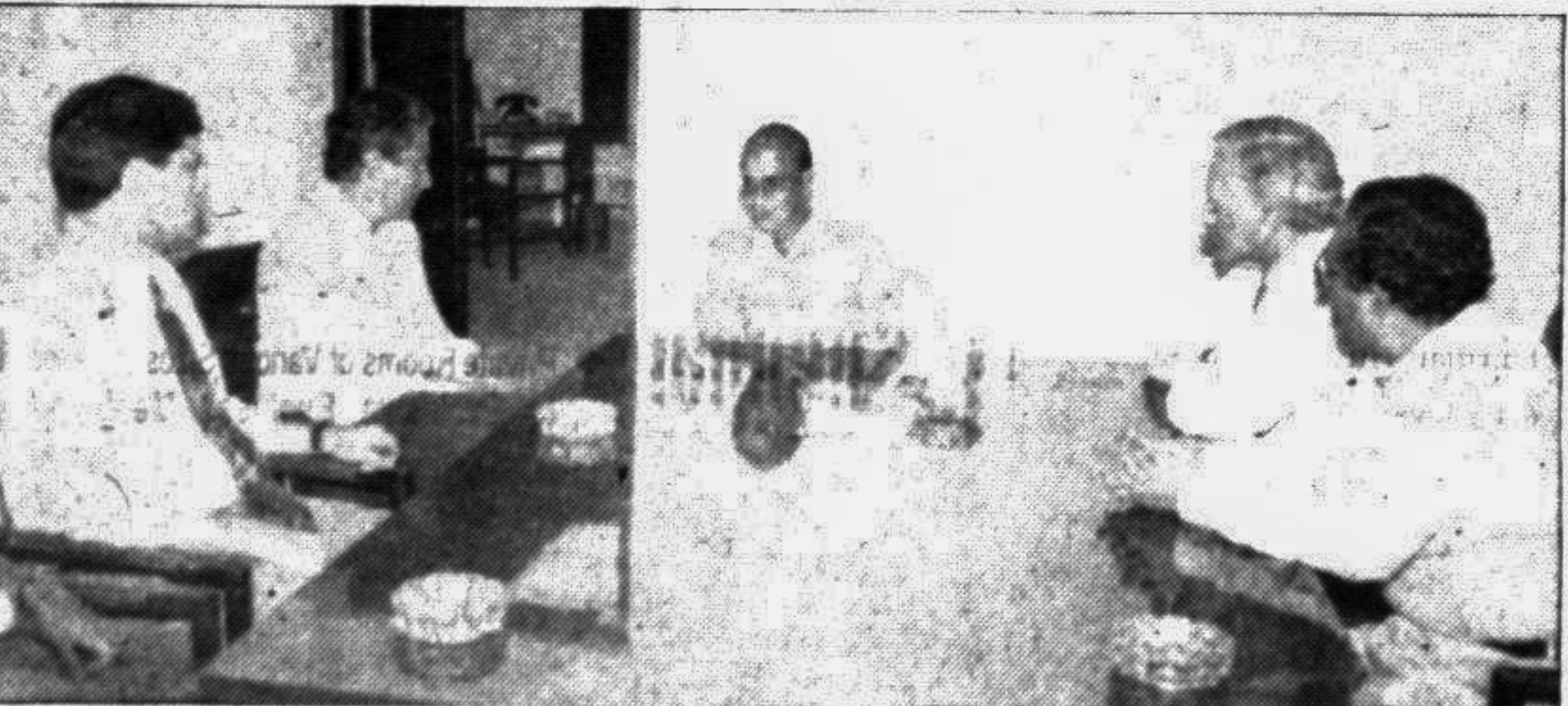
The 12th of June. A seemingly ordinary date in a seemingly ordinary month. But, for Bangladesh, it was akin to the Ides of March — a fateful day, on which hung the question of an entire nation's survival. It was with bated breath and hearts fluttering with hope, that the people of the country, including its capital Dhaka, went to polls, to vote for the candidate of their choice. There they stood, men and women, rich and poor, in long queues, withstanding the heat and dust, the rain and the humidity, patiently awaiting their turn.

Looking upon that long stretch of humanity, it seemed, that endurance is the one quality that we have in abundance. In the last few decades, our nation has not only endured but also survived, the ravages of war, political instability, the lies and false hopes of various ruling parties. They have endured an uninterrupted diet of corruption and tyranny practised by the people in power.

They have been a helpless witness to injustice and wrong-doing and they have suffered unimaginable hardships with unthinkable fortitude. But, inspite of everything, it is seldom with anything less than high hopes, do our people go to vote. Hoping against hope, that there will be a better tomorrow, a clean chapter written by a white knight, untainted by corruption and deception, they line up before the polling booths.

But in this election there is a clear shift towards realism, reflected in the voting pattern. The people of the capital, specially the women today, are more aware of and committed to their responsibilities as a voter. They are no longer blindly voting for a party, nor following the choice of their spouses. Their votes are going to the candidate, who they judge to be more capable and representative of their interests. Now, the trend seems more towards personal charisma and ability, rather than pure party backing. And, it's a good thing, since these candidates are the ones who mainly comprise a party, it's an implicit signal, that we are tired of enduring smooth talking, slick politicians and that it's high time we had hard-working, committed people who actually could do something constructive for the community. It indicates an era for a new breed of responsible politicians who are honest and transparent in their dealings. An impossible aspiration for Bangladesh? Maybe, maybe not, but Dhaka still keeps on hoping.

And, as the country prepares itself for another 5-year-term of governance, the palpable tension pulsating in the deserted city streets of the 12th, gave testimony to the grave anxieties felt by its people. Will there be more promises and lies? Isn't it high time that the endurance test ended?



Leaders of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) Stephen Solarz, former US Congressman and Andrew Peacock, former Australian foreign minister, met Jatiya Party Secretary-General Anwar Hossain Manju at Ittefaq Bhavan yesterday.

— JP photo

Weather

Moderate rainfall likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Chittagong, Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Rajshahi divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office said a moderately heavy rainfall may occur at places over Chittagong division during the period.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Meanwhile, Cox's Bazar experienced the highest 10 mm rainfall while Khulna and Sylhet 01 mm during the last 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday.

Country's highest temperature 36.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and Dinajpur and the lowest 22.2 degrees at Kutubdia.

The sun sets today at 6.49 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.12 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.3	27.5	66	86
Chittagong	32.6	26.3	75	87
Rajshahi	34.0	26.6	72	58
Khulna	32.6	26.5		

Australian aid for tornado victims

Australian emergency relief of Australian dollar 50,000 (Tk 16,50,000) has been distributed to assist in the provision of food, medical supplies, shelter and long term income generating projects for the tornado victims of Tangail. The Australian High Commissioner here Kenneth Aspinall informed that the relief has been distributed through four reputed NGOs, says a press release.

Aspinall announced that the emergency relief has been distributed in the following way: 2,000 dollar for Kumudini Hospital for medical supplies; 20,000 dollar for BURO Tangail for the supply of tubewells, sanitation, and an emergency employment creation programme; 15,000 dollar for Save the Children Fund Australia for emergency housing, vegetable and seed distribution, tree plantation, de-watering of polluted ponds, sanitation and medical supplies; and 13,000 dollar to Unnayan Shahojoy Team (UST) for medical supplies and food relief.

Probashi Bangladeshi Kallyan Parishad

The Probashi Bangladeshi Samaj Kallyan Parishad of Saudi Arabia has donated Tk 45,000 to the 'Prime Minister's relief fund' for the tornado victims of Tangail district, reports BSS.

The donation has been received through the consulate general of Bangladesh in Jeddah recently.



Defence Secretary M A Hakim presiding over the meeting of the Bangladesh Cadet College Council at the Ministry of Defence at Gana Bhaban, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday.

— ISPR photo

CU MA admission test schedule

CHITTAGONG, June 18: Written test for admission into M A (preliminary) English course for the session 1994-95 of the Chittagong University will be held on July 4 next at the Arts Faculty building of the university, a university press release said here today, reports BSS.

Classes of the MSS (final year) students (new batch) for the academic session 1992-93 will begin from May 18 next, the press release added.



Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman presiding over the meeting of the council of advisers at his office yesterday.

— PID photo

What's on today

Seminar on monsoonal rain: A three-day SAARC seminar on 'Predictability of Monsoonal Rain and Flooding' will begin. Bangladesh Meteorological Department has organised the seminar. Venue: Sheraton hotel. Time: 10 am.

STD-AIDS network AGM: The annual general meeting of STD-AIDS Network Bangladesh will be held. The day-long meet will review the last year's activities in the related fields and formulate further action plan. Venue: SPAARSO auditorium. Time: ?

Rotary Club of Dhaka Midtown: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: White Castle Restaurant. Time: 5:30 pm.

Report of attack on Obaid false, baseless: Selim

Member-secretary of Awami League central election steering committee Dr. Mohammad Selim yesterday refuted the allegation published in a section of newspapers to the effect that the Awami League workers damaged the vehicle of BNP nominee Faridpur-2 constituency K M Obaidur Rahman, a party press release said, reports BSS.

Dr Selim termed the newspaper report, published on the basis of a news item broadcast earlier by Radio Bangladesh, as completely untrue.

The fact, Dr Selim said, was that the BNP workers rather damaged three cars when the Awami League leaders and some newly elected MPs were heading toward Sakpaldia for launching election campaign in favour of AL nominee Begum Sajeda Chowdhury.

Meanwhile, Awami League Presidium member and MP-elect from Shariatpur Abdur Razzak yesterday said the news item on the alleged shooting at K M Obaidur Rahman at Nagarkanda is concocted, sheer lie and conspiracy to undo the repolling.

CPB alleges rigging in Jamalpur-2

The Communist Party of Bangladesh yesterday alleged massive rigging of vote in Jamalpur-2 constituency during June 12 parliament election and demanded fresh voting, reports UNB.

It demanded judicial inquiry into the irregularities and repolling in all centres by cancelling the partial results which have already been announced.

CPB leaders at a press conference at its central office showed ballot papers with stamp marks on 'sickle', the party's election symbol, found in huge number on the streets.

They said the ballots found on the streets proved that a large number of people cast ballots for CPB candidate Manjurul Ahsan Khan.

They further alleged that armed cadres of BNP and Awami League candidates captured at least 17 polling centres in seven unions and drove out CPB's polling agents.

According to them, the supporters of AL and BNP, in presence of presiding and polling officers, indiscriminately stamped ballot papers.

Hanif greets city dwellers

President of Dhaka Mahanagar Awami League Mayor Mohammad Hanif and acting general secretary Akhtarul Alam Monday congratulated the residents of Dhaka for giving their mandate in June 12 polls in favour of Awami League which spearheaded the great War of Liberation, reports BSS.

In a joint statement the leaders expressed their sincere thanks to the Caretaker Government, Election Commission, all officers and employees relating to election duties, members of armed forces, BDR, Police and Ansar for assisting in holding a free, fair and peaceful polls.

Political parties committed to press freedom: RSF

On the initiative of Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) the major political leaders in Bangladesh have signed a declaration of principle ensuring their commitment for press freedom, says a press release.

Sheikh Hasina, chief of Awami League, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, acting chairman of Jatiya Party, Khalequzzaman Bhuiya, coordinator of the Left Democratic Front, Gulam Azam, chief of Jamaat-e-Islami reaffirmed their commitment to freedom of press and security of journalists by signing a declaration of principle on the eve of the 12 June parliamentary election.

Begum Khaleda Zia, Chairperson of the BNP, promised to endorse the declaration after the election.

Reporters Sans Frontieres recalls that this democratisation process can not be completed unless press freedom and security of journalists is guaranteed.

Reporters Sans Frontieres sent a mission to Dhaka from 6 to 17 June. Barbara Vital-Durand, chief of the Asia desk, met with several journalist leaders, editors, communication institutes, victims, union leaders and political leaders. All have proved a high level of understanding of the situation, concern and commitment.

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