

Dhaka Day by Day

Dhaka in Rainy Season

by Samia Islam

The thought of a ride through the streets of Dhaka can ruin a perfectly good day. Not that perfectly good days abound in our lives or anything but add to that your concern over the actual route that you will take and the state it's in, hygiene-wise, thanks to the rain mostly. The squalor and muck of ordinary Dhaka deteriorate substantially during rainy season. The sights are enough to threaten to ruin an entire week actually but resilient Dhaka dwellers have developed very short-term memories as a defence mechanism. But that is not the only defence in our aid. Being Homo sapiens of the special Dhaka kind, we are better equipped than the inferior species of the animal kingdom who are on the lower rungs of the biological hierarchy. The skunks only have their smell and squids have only the ink or the scorpion, has the poison sting but we have an enviable array of defence apparatus to make us fit enough for life in Dhaka.

First and foremost, we are endowed with selective eye sight so that we know what unsightly places to skip when scanning the horizon for an unoccupied rickshaw. We can remain unruffled by a fellow man on the street pucker his mouth to spit right in our way. But now our garbage tracking abilities are aided by the new improved garbage bins all

We are also blessed to be unaware of the throbbing beats of Rangoela emanating from the neighbour's CD. Why is it that one is never surprised once in a blue moon with Moonlight Sonata or Ravi Shankar's renditions wafting through the air? Apologies for the digression, I must be in a time warp or else why should I bring these up while discussing music, right in Dhaka? The only thing we have in common with Beethoven is that we are all deaf.

The third weapon in our enviable repertoire is our dulled sense of smell. What a relief that we don't have to be scrupulous about odours any more otherwise we would be faced with an impossible situation. It would have to be a trade off between the country life (with or without cable) and the city life for us because Dhaka and repulsive odours go hand in hand. These days if you hold your breath in public while skirting a garbage bin or carefully picking your way through a garbage mound, passers-by make flip remarks to remind you that all the snobbery will not ultimately save you from the dirt of the grave. Philosophy and squalor are two sides of the same coin actually. Not that the yellow garbage container and its cruder counter parts is the only place to shock you into believing that you've been gassed in an attempt at biological warfare. It has dawned on



Bin in garbage.

— Star photo

over town that come in a curiously vibrant yellow color and is hence very eye-catching. The unsuspecting pedestrian is now warned of its exact placement as soon as he enters a particular zone, the objective of which is to silently yell to the instincts of an old-hand in Dhaka to stay at least 50 yards away since in almost all instances, the trash that was supposed to be inside these giant containers is instead scattered around it. Dhaka residents know better than to put their garbage in any suspect crevice just because somebody says so. We believe in sharing. So what if it's garbage, it's the thought that counts.

We have ruptured ear drums to same us from the agony of sitting through 45 minute traffic jams when the driver of the Corolla EXIV directly behind our vehicle is just honking its hydraulic horn to kill time. Or to be spared from the barrage of swear words when a fist fights break out between rickshawpullers,

us a while back that garbage bins do not have to be placed by the City Corporation alone. It only takes an outstanding member of the community to lead the way in dropping his/her garbage anywhere he/she pleases. People soon follow the leader. In a jiffy, this domino principle gives us alleyways in Malibagh or Maghbazar or any other densely populated area that are half taken over by the area's garbage. This little garbage heap, with the passage of time, becomes the play ground for man's best friend and his best friends. Add to all this, the pouring rain on the accumulated garbage and your have a complete picture of the unsanitary living practices that is Dhaka's own.

So during this rainy season, when the un-bearably unhygienic conditions of Dhaka are enhanced manifold by the incessant rain and accompanied water logging, aren't you glad that you come prepared?



The National Committee for Preservation of Fundamental Rights in Chittagong Hill Tracts brought out a procession in the city yesterday in demand of the immediate rescue of Kalpana Chakma. — Star photo

What's on today....

Sri Lanka Film Festival: On the penultimate day of the 4-day festival, the film 'Kedapathaka Chaya' (Reflection on the mirror) will be screened. Venue: Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Time: 7:00 pm.

Theatre Art anniversary: On the occasion of its founding anniversary, Theatre Art has organised a 9-day drama festival. The festival will be inaugurated by DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif. Venue: Guide House auditorium. Time: 10:30 pm.

BAFP lecture series: As part of its continuing medical education programme, the Bangladesh Academy of Family Physicians has organised a lecture series on diabetes, to be delivered by experts on the subject. Venue: Lecture room, Bangladesh Society of Ultrasonography, 10/7 Eastern Plaza, 9th Floor, Hatirpool. Time: 9 am - 12 noon.

BSCE AGM: The annual general meeting and election of Bangladesh Society for Conservation of Environment will be held. Venue: Shishu Academy conference room. Time: 9:30 pm.

Ain O Salish Kendra workshop: Ain O Salish Kendra Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust and Madaripur Legal Aid Association have jointly organised a workshop on 'Public Interest Litigation Sharing Experience and Initiatives'. Venue: Planning and Development Academy, Nilkhet. Time: 4:30 pm.

Lions Club of Dhaka Angels Great: The regular meeting of the club will be held. Venue: City Translation Centre, 104 Kakrail. Time: 6 pm.

Rotaract Club of Metrop Dhaka: The general meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Rotary School, East Razabazar, Green Road. Time: 5:30 pm.

Lankan film artiste visits Press Club

Celebrated film actress of Sri Lanka Swarna Mala Barachchi yesterday visited the Jatiya Press Club and exchanged views with the journalists, reports BSS.

Press Club president Rezauddin Ahmed and general secretary Khondkar Monirul Alam spoke on the occasion and presented Swarna Barachchi with a crest of the Jatiya Press Club.

Swarna Mala has been in the city in connection with a four-day Sri Lankan film festival which began at the Shilpakala Academy Wednesday. Four films of Swarna are being screened at the festival.

Indian, Pak envoys call on Nasim

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Deb Mukharjee called on Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim at his office yesterday, reports BSS.

They discussed matters of mutual interest and exchanged views on the development of telecommunication system between the two countries for effective communication.

The Pakistani High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Karam Elahi also called on Post and Telecommunications Minister at his office yesterday.

They discussed matters of mutual interest and hoped that existing relations and cooperation between the two countries would further be strengthened in future.

Govt urged to rescue Kalpana

By Staff Correspondent

The National Committee for Protecting the Fundamental Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts has urged the government to rescue Kalpana Chakma who has been reportedly missing since June 12 from her residence at Lalley Ghona of Baghachhari Thana under Rangamati district.

The National Committee has also demanded discussion of the Hill Tracts issue in the Jatiya Sangsad.

The committee yesterday submitted to the Speaker a memorandum in which it expressed grave concern and disappointment at the government's reported silence about Kalpana, a leader of the Hill Women's Federation.

Signed by the Convenor of the Committee, Barrister Lutfar Rahman Shajahan, the memorandum also demanded "constitutional Recognition" of the tribal people and withdrawal of the army from the hill tracts.

Earlier the committee held a rally in front of the National Press Club, Khushi Kabir, Farida Akhter, Bartika Chakma and Anu Muhammad spoke at the rally.

Pak trade team due July 30

A 10-member trade delegation from Pakistan will arrive in Dhaka on July 30 on a four-day visit to Bangladesh to promote trade between the two countries, a Pakistan High Commission press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

The delegation will comprise exporters of processed and canned fruits, vegetables, cut-flowers, building materials, agricultural implements, pesticides, medicinal herbs and rice.

During their stay in Dhaka, the members of Pakistan trade delegation will hold talks with the officials of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry and individual local importers.

BOU accord

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) Wednesday signed two agreements on construction of its Rangpur and Jessore regional resource centres, says a press release.

The Rangpur RRC will be constructed at an estimated cost of Tk 65.37 lakh and Jessore RRC will cost Tk 65 lakh.

Vice-Chancellor Dr M Shamsheer Ali and proprietors of Messrs A Latif & Co. Ltd and Engineers & Arch Ltd signed the accord.

The construction of both the centres will be completed in a year.

Change in TOEFL schedule

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), scheduled to be held in the morning of August 3, will be held in the afternoon because of the Higher Secondary Certificate examination, reports BSS.

The date and venue of the examination will remain the same. Candidates have been requested to report to Notre Dame College at 2 pm August 3, a USIS press release said.

Weather

Heavy rainfall likely

Heavy rainfall is likely at one or two places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, said a Met Office forecast, reports UNB.

Moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind may occur at most places over Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Dhaka divisions and at many places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions during the period.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The country's highest temperature was recorded yesterday 36.7 degrees Celsius at Sylhet and the lowest 23.8 degrees at Srimangal.

The sun sets today at 6:45 pm and rises Saturday on 5:26 am.

The 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	32.6	27.5	75	77
Chittagong	30.6	25.2	86	92
Rajshahi	32.2	26.6	77	73
Khulna	29.0	24.5	95	97
Barisal	31.7	25.0	85	95

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Saudi envoy meets Faezul

Saudi Charge d'Affaires to Bangladesh Hani A Sindi called on State Minister for Jute and Textiles AK Faizul Huq at his office in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting they discussed different matters of mutual interest specially ways and means of enhancing cooperation and exchange of experience between the two countries in jute and textile sectors.

The Charge d'Affaires laid importance on visit of Bangladesh businessmen delegation to Saudi Arabia for the development of jute and textile industry.

They gave importance on close cooperation between the two countries in the days to come.

Later, a delegation of Bangladesh Awami Tanti League, led by its convener Showrab Uddin Ahmed and coordinator Sadona Das Gupta, called on State Minister for Jute and Textiles at his office.

2 envoys meet Obaidul Kader

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Deb Mukharjee yesterday called on State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Kader at his office in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The discussed matters of mutual interest especially sports and cultural affairs of the two countries.

Meanwhile, North Korean ambassador to Bangladesh Kank Yank Dok also called on the State Minister at the latter's office.

They discussed matters relating to mutual interest.

169 arrested

Police arrested 169 persons on various charges from different parts of the city in last 24 hours till 8 am yesterday. Of them, 20 were held under warrant of arrest while 35 in murder, dacoity, mugging, extortion and other charges, said a DMP press release, reports UNB.



Sultana Kamal gets Humfrey Freedom Award

By Staff Correspondent

The John Humfrey Freedom Award had been announced for Sultana Kamal, a human and women rights activist of the country, according to a press release issued yesterday.

International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD), a Canada-based organisation, had announced the Humfrey Award for Sultana Kamal on July 17 for her role in the field of human and women rights movements, the press release said.

Sultana has been invited to Canada to receive the award at the end of this year. Last year Sultana also received the Ananya Top Ten Award of '95, the release added.

She also received special certificate of appreciation from the Commander in Chief for her role in the great War of Liberation in 1971.

Sultana is the second daughter of Poet Sufia Kamal. She is an executive member of the Ain O Shalish Kendra and a central member of the Human Living Under Muslim Lodge, an international organisation, the release added.

BRRi seminar on food security

Begum Matia Chowdhury Minister for Agriculture, Food, Disaster Management and Relief, yesterday urged the scientists and extensionists to work relentlessly to ensure balanced food security for the people by improving high yielding technology, reports BSS.

She was addressing the inaugural session of a seminar on food security organised by the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRi) at the institute auditorium in Gazipur yesterday.

M Akhter Ali, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, presided over the meeting.



A child artist trying her hand at an art competition organised by the Health Directorate in observance of the 'Breast-feeding Week', at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy in the city yesterday. — Star photo

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GROUP STUDY EXCHANGE PROGRAMME ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 3280 BANGLADESH

Under this programme of Rotary International 2 Group Study Exchange teams from Bangladesh will be sent to USA in 1997. One team is expected to leave Dhaka in the 2nd week March '97 and the other team in the 2nd week of April '97.

Applicants for team members must have a sound educational background and academically well qualified. He/She must be actively engaged in a recognised business or profession in Bangladesh on a full-time basis for at least 2 years and intend to continue in the same in the future. He/She must have fluency in English both written and spoken.

Further information on this programme are available with all Rotary Club in Bangladesh. Interested candidates may contact the President or Secretary of the local Rotary Club immediately for further information. Applications should be sent to the President of a Rotary Club in Bangladesh.

A. M. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan
Chairman, GSE Committee
Rotary District 3280