

Life Must Go On...

PHOTO FEATURE ON FLOOD



Food must be cooked, even if the household is shifted from floor to rooftop. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin



Newspaper must be delivered, even if the hawkker has to wade through waist-deep water. — Star photo by Enamul Haq



And why deny the pleasure of bathing when it's a pond in the house itself! — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Diana: Memorabilia

Most Bankable of Dead Stars

Reuter reports from London

IN life she was one of the world's most glamorous women. In death she has spawned an industry of wall-to-wall kitsch.

From singing plates to colonic irrigation, Diana's name has been adopted by the bizarre, the brazen and sometimes the bountiful and the dead princess has joined Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley as the most bankable of dead stars.

"Maybe we could organise a minute's pause from the profiteering," commented Britain's satirical magazine *Private Eye* in a cartoon ahead of the first anniversary of Diana's death on August 31.

Britain's tourist shops abound with cheap T-shirts, teatowels, keyrings, clocks and crockery bearing her profile, Barbie-style dolls, rose-scented candles, lottery scratchcards and even a brand of dog food reflect the massive pulling power of the princess.

Book shops groan with publications examining everything from Diana's role as a fashion icon to her tangled love life and psychological treatises on the extraordinary emotional response on her death.

T-shirts, Books, Bus Tours And when you've got the T-shirt, read the book and played the tribute album, you could hop on a bus tour of the places that featured in Diana's life or enroll in a bereavement course for those still mired in mourning.

Most of the memorabilia are snapped up by the millions of Diana fans around the world who idolise the princess with a passion usually reserved for movie stars.

But even bad taste has its limits.

Plans for a car commercial on television featuring a Diana-lookalike being chased through the streets by photographers were axed by South Korea's Kia Company in May after provok-

ing outrage in Britain. One company had plans for a Diana colonic irrigation kit, capitalising on her reported use of that method of detoxification.

Memorial Fund

Struggling against a tidal wave of tacky memorabilia is the Diana Memorial Fund, which was set up to distribute to charity the mountain of cash that poured in after her death and to regulate the products it deemed worthy of her name.

But in July it lost a seven-month battle to regulate Diana's face as a trademark when Britain's patent office ruled that her face should belong to the world instead of becoming the property of the memorial fund.

The ruling quashed hopes of stopping the sale of Diana mementoes that generate no money for the charitable causes she championed such as AIDS, the homeless, leprosy and the global anti-landmines campaign.

The fund itself has come under fire for branching out into merchandising deals which lend Diana's face, signature and official logo to products in exchange for a share in the profits or royalties. Diana's signature on tubs of margarine and sanctioned a scratchcard lottery. Both enterprises raked in thousands of pounds for charity.

But Diana's brother Earl Charles Spencer voiced the feelings of many Britons that the Diana industry had gone too far. He called it tasteless and degrading and said the fund should be wound up in 2000.

"The idea of it going on and on making money out of the princess's name is certainly not what she would have wanted," said Spencer's spokesman.

Museum at Ancestral Home

Spencer has created his own

Diana moneyspinner — a museum with a giftshop in the grounds of the childhood home they shared at Althorp house in central England. It is also Diana's burial place.

Spencer says he has no desire to make Althorp like Elvis' sprawling mansion in Memphis that is visited by tens of thousands of fans every year.

"It must never become Britain's answer to Graceland. Whilst I live, it will never do so," he said.

Part of the money raised by the 9.50 pound (15.50 dollars) entrance fee will go to the memorial fund but the souvenirs on sale at Althorp carry neither Diana's name nor her signature.

Memorabilia is not the only way to cash in on Diana's posthumous fame. There is also a booming business in tours, both in London and Paris.

The Diana memorial coach tour takes visitors past Kensington Palace where the princess lived after her separation from Prince Charles, Westminster Abbey where the funeral was held, the gym she used and her favourite fashion stores.

"Thousands of people are visiting London and asking about Diana and yet there is no official memorial," said entrepreneur Nicola Pearce, defending her tours against accusations of bad taste.

Even more questionable is the Paris equivalent where a hotel is running a tour which takes in the tunnel where the Mercedes Benz carrying Diana and her lover Dodi al-Fayed crashed at high speed, the hospital where she was pronounced dead and the Ritz Hotel where her fateful last journey began.

Diana Needlework on the Net

The internet is predictably another fertile source of Diana tat. Some sites offer Diana nostalgia needlework or a glass "English rose" for those ready

with a credit card.

A tribute song written by the previously unknown John Houghon is available for 7.99 dollars on the web.

Her's how it goes: "In the sparkle of her eyes is where the peace and comfort

Princess and the Queen of Hearts (Don't draw the Queen of Diamonds boy, she'll beat you if she is able. The Queen of Hearts is always your best bet" — Eagles glorified too QoH in their song "Desperado" long ago).

Then men who knew her closely might wonder if Diana had a magic voice instead of her flat barely articulate one. But she will be remembered for her complex iconic status. For that we turn to her astonishing Kaleidoscope of images: fairy Princess, field worker, fashion model, loving mother, international play-girl and hospital visitor.

Diana was a child of her own time. Mass photography and filming my have killed her, but it also made her and she was not shy in responding to its possibilities in a way no other member of the Royal family has ever done before. As a result she has ensured her own immortality on the grand scale though she observed: "I seemed to be the front page everyday which is an isolating experience and the higher media put you bigger they drop." Diana took up the look from where Princess Margaret had left off, an undated version of the romantic English rose look, a face with eyes downcast and shy. By the mid-eighties that had been relegated to the ragbag as she set-off to the sleek, modern, fashionable young woman of a kind that must have evoked the ghost of Wallis Simpson at the back of some people's minds. Hers was a figure so perfect. As a result she embodied a new phase — in the alliance of the monarchy, the press and the world of fashion. Diana was the fantasy of modern women's potential. She established the possibility that wearing a sexy dress was compatible with a commitment to the work of Mother Teresa.

This is more than larger than life version of the old adage that those whom God loves die young. Diana's iconic potency is strengthened by the fact that we shall never see her middle aged or old. Like Marilyn Monroe (to



lies. She's a princess that the world had called its own. And the battles that she's won are for all to carry on. Now that God has called a special angel home."

DIANA was a woman of spectacular glamour and beauty — a woman as a uniquely modern figure. Were there before so many flowers? So many cards and candles? So much love? Protocol had barely got a look in — people's grief came in bright colours, undimmed by etiquette.

whom Elton John sings "never knowing who to cling to when rain set in your candles burnt out long before your legend ever did".

She will be eternally young. In her case a great beauty and a great humanitarian rolled into one. This is an image of untold power which will continue to haunt the monarchy.

If Diana's marriage has held, the present events would have lifted the monarchy right back from where it had slipped and endowed it with a halo.

It is the loss of a Princess who exercised virtues absent from other members of the family. Her being as if tragic heroine in a great novel, whose fate falls forever before her needs — makes her one of us.

"I desperately loved my husband and I wanted to share everything together and I thought we were a very good team —" Her incomplete sentence makes her look like a tragic figure in a happy family we are so familiar with. Her sense of caring has always shone through — "I was the separated wife of the Prince of Wales. I was a problem, full-stop. I'll fight to the end because I believe that I have a role to ful-

fill and I've got two children to bring up." At times we turn to be pessimistic yet we give the expression in a specific way. Diana was not uncommon either: "People think that at the end of the day, a man is the only answer. Actually a fulfilling job is better for me — I've got wonderful friends, I've got my boys, I've got my work." But who knew the pain was all around!

From billowy skirted nanny to khaki-clad landmine campaigner, Diana's journey was contemporary woman's tale of personal reinvention.

Her sudden death was as if having let the home team down. For us here in Bangladesh was something like seeing Brazil going out of final in the World Cup soccer. The new generation has grown up with Diana; older people say they know where they were when President Kennedy died, but nothing like this has happened to them before. For myself — one year ago on 31st August I rushed to the fax machine in my office that morning to check incoming messages from our Embassy in Paris. From a nearby TV a CNN voice sonorously said: Diana dies in car crash in Paris.

Diana: Tribute

My Sense of Déjà Vu

by Salahuddin Akbar

Princess and the Queen of Hearts (Don't draw the Queen of Diamonds boy, she'll beat you if she is able. The Queen of Hearts is always your best bet" — Eagles glorified too QoH in their song "Desperado" long ago).

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Cosmic Thunder

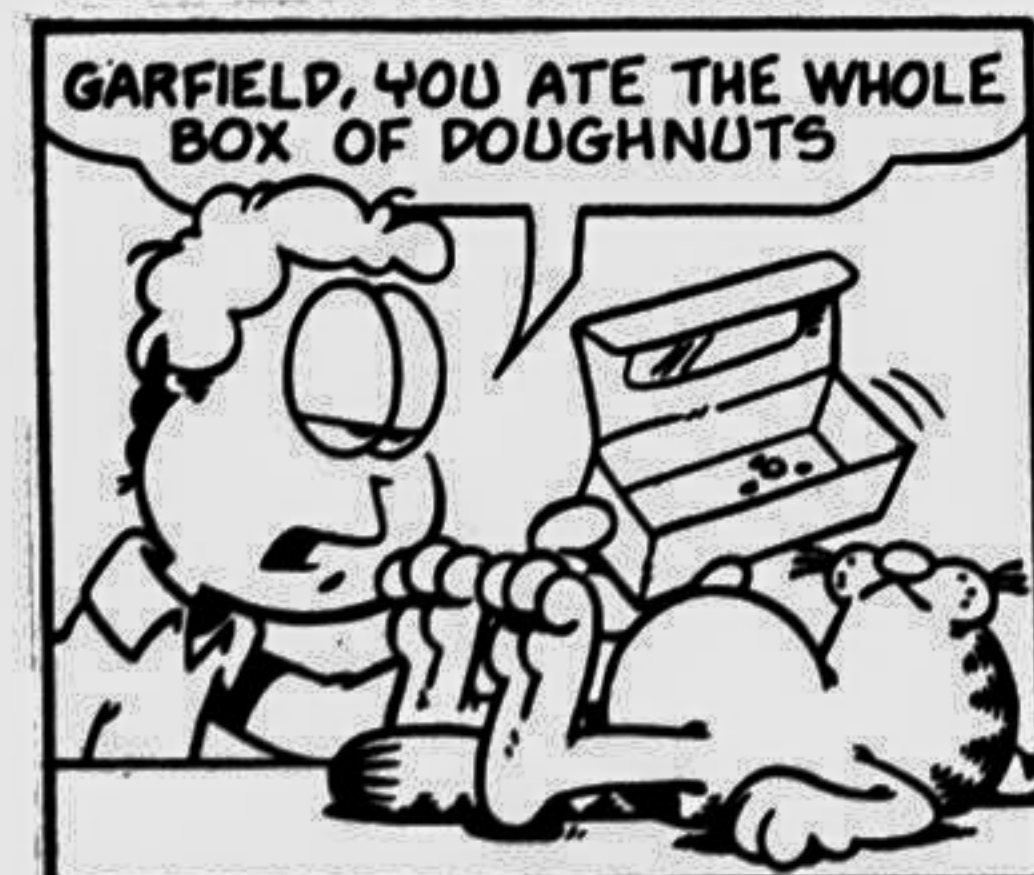
IN the far reaches of space, cosmic thunderstorms are raging which generate windspeeds of more than 965 kilometres per second and temperatures hotter than the sun, reported scientists.

Massive clusters of galaxies are colliding at supersonic speed millions of light years away, creating intense shock and violent turbulence. However, there will be no tangible effects on earth as the storms are occurring far away. But one of these galactic weather systems is likely to brush the planet. The "local cluster" containing the Milky Way is being sucked towards the larger Virgo cluster — although the crunch will not come for several billion years.

Astronomers led by Jack Burns, from the University of Missouri, have used data from radio and X-ray telescopes combined with supercomputer simulations to produce what they termed their weather report. The research is being funded by NASA and the US National Science Foundation. The astronomers say "the weather report for the galaxy clusters is strong with alternating high and low pressure, high winds, turbulence and heat waves. With time (billions of years) the weather will calm as the accretion events become more rare."

CSE/Down To Earth Features

Garfield®



by Jim Davis

James Bond

