

## Seminar

## Dhaka's architectural scenario

Prospects of a cleaner atmosphere for Dhaka dwellers dealt at a seminar on architecture

FAYZA HAQ

A recent day-long seminar on architecture in Dhaka, focusing on transformation of the city, took place at the Goethe Institut.

The subjects dealt with at the seminar were Swadhinata Stambha, Dhanmandi Lake, Uttara Third Phase, public housing, Basundhara city, Scholastica School etc. Among the speakers were Kazi Khaleed Ashraf, Dr Sharifuddin Ahmed, Dr Syed Mansoor Islam, Mazharul Islam, Dr Perween Hassan, Bashirul Haq, Saiful Huq and Syed Fahim Munaim. The speakers, including architects, planners and people from other disciplines critically examined the present architectural and planning scenario of Dhaka and presented their recommendations on how more sunlight, air and space could be brought in for the Dhaka dwellers.

Dhaka today is a bustling urban agglomerate and at the beginning of this millennium Dhaka will be one of the top ten cities in the world. But this will mean it will be even more populated and congested. Efforts have to be made to stop turning Dhaka into an urban apocalypse.

Saiful Huq in his opening remarks said, "Dhaka may be providing its inhabitants opportunities for employment and wealth but the public realm of the city is being rapidly eroded. A glance though the daily newspapers will show the thriving of apartment blocks, office towers, shopping malls; but at the same time we come across stories of encroachment of the river, shrinkage of parks and open spaces, the plight of pedestrians, overcrowding in schools etc. The spaces that encourage interaction and participation are gradually disappearing. The society is getting polarised and alienated. Isolation, congestion, pollution, fear of crime has replaced community participation."

Speaking about the "Shadhinata Stambha" at Suhrabury Udyan, MS Chowdhury said, "The landscaping is addressed more on a revitalization theme considering the 6000 trees in the 68 acre 'udyani'. New trees are being planted with consideration to form, spread, colour and scent and their appropri-

ateness to a particular location or season.

The approach to the 'Shadhinata Stambha' itself has been arranged as a sequence of events. People first arrive at the 'Shikha Chirantan' from where they move through a mesh of trees to a vast place. The joy of freedom is translated into a large circular pool, encountered halfway through the journey whose water, at level with the paving, is drawn into itself and through the vacuum at the centre it falls into an inner sanctum. Here the only light coming in through the oculus in the ceiling is filtered and dispersed by the water that falls through it.

"The glass tower or the Tower of Light is to be a symbol for man's urge to be free. The mysterious travel of light through the section of clear, thick glass is a desired effect. Although clad around an inner reflective steel vertical space frame structure, glass begins visually, in technique of construction, to take on the quality of masonry."

Iqbal Habib presenting his paper on Dhanmandi Lake said, "The Dhaka City Corporation initiated this project and this encompasses an area of almost 86 acres of land with multifarious entertainment facility. It appears to be quite unmanageable for any individual government organization to run the facilities of this magnitude and maintain the whole area at the same time due to inadequate resources and manpower." He added that swimming and health club with separate ponds for beginners, shower and changing locker facility will be there. There will also be a sitting plaza and "ghat" along with designed plantations with landscape area adjacent to the walkways. This applies to Sector 1. In the second sector there will be parking areas with sitting plaza at the entry point of Road No 32. Here there will be a souvenir shop and ticket counter for the "Bangabandhu Smriti Museum".

The paper said that in the third sector there will be a public toilet, rental parking area, skating arena, sitting plaza with kiosk for food, floating decks and footbridges, and plantations with landscape area for walkways to the footpath. The fourth sector, one was told, will contain a boat club with a souvenir shop and a floating coffee shop. There will be a walkway for footbridge, designed



Boating club at Dhanmandi Lake. Architects: Utti Sthapati Brinda Ltd.

plantations with landscaped area adjacent to the walkways and a rental parking area. The fifth section, one was informed, will include fast food restaurant with kitchen and toilet facilities and there will be more landscaping here with designed

plantations. Selina Afroza in her paper on "Public Housing: Transformation from bungalows to flats" with its case study of lawmakers' residences at Minto Road, said, "In Dhaka city the public sector has

probably contributed directly or indirectly to not more than 10 per cent of all urban housing activity during the last 40 years. Despite the limited number of sites and services projects, public housing has primarily catered to the needs of govern-

ment servants...At present altogether 11,678 dwelling units fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works. They are located at Eskaton, Garden Road, Minto Road, Hare Road, Bailey Road, Green Road, Gulshan, Dhanmandi, Uttara, Azimpur etc.

"It is a fact to be understood by all



Walkway at Dhanmandi Lake. Architects: Utti Sthapati Brinda Ltd.



Seating area and walkway at Dhanmandi Lake. Architects: Utti Sthapati Brinda Ltd.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

## Theatre

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has organised a week-long theatrical shows from May 6 to 12 at Shawkat Osman Auditorium of the National Public Library Directorate, Shahbag. Seven theatre groups from across the country are due to take part in the programme.

## Photography Show

A solo photography exhibition by Albert Khan is now being held at Aerial Centre, House # 15, Road # 7, Dhanmondi. The show runs from 2 to 8 p.m. daily till May 12.

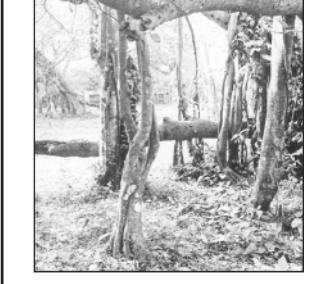
## Photography

A photo show featuring works of noted photographer and author of two important books on photography Mohammad Rafiqul Islam is now being held at National Photographic Gallery at 63/2 Science Laboratory Road, Dhaka.

## Satyajit Ray Retrospective

Satyajit Ray Retrospective organised by Zahir Raihan Film Society is now being held at the auditorium of the High Commission of India at Road No. 2, Dhanmondi. Screening schedule: Mahanagar(The big city) and Pratidhwani(The Adversary) on May 11 at 3:00 & 6:00 p.m. respectively. Seemabaddha (Company Limited) and Jana Aranya (The Middle Man) on May 12 at 3:00 & 6:00 p.m. respectively. Goopy Gyre Bagha Byne(The adventures of Goopy and Bagha) and Hirak Rajar Desher (The Kingdom of Diamonds) on May 18 at 3:00 & 6:00 p.m. respectively.

## Photography



## Show

A week-long photography exhibition featuring natural beauty of the Sunderbans is now being held at International School, Plot# 80, Block# E, Basundhara, Dhaka. The show runs till May 10 daily from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

## TV GUIDE

## BTV

3:00 Opening Announcement

## STAR GOLD

10:30 Woodland Bollywood News

4:00 Khabar

4:05 Cartoon: Casper

4:20 Shukhi Poribar

4:40 Documentary: Wild Nature Japan

5:20 Niramoy

5:45 Pushpitathya

6:00 Khabar

6:10 Kendrabindu: development programme

6:35 Programme from Chittagong station

7:00 News Headlines

7:05 Geet Bilan

7:30 Nupur Nikkon

8:00 News in Bengali

8:30 Drama Serial: Sorol Shitangshu

9:00 News Headlines

9:05 Film Show: Young Hercules

9:30 Drama Series: Aloukik

10:00 Serial: Carlie Chaplin

10:30 News in English

10:55 Geet Bichitra

11:30 Khabar / The News

11:45 Closing

## EKUSHHEY

12:00 Ekushey Midday

12:20 Bangla Movie: Shamir Shohag

2:40 Drishti

3:00 Ekushey Headlines

3:05 Bubuner Baba

3:30 Jononi

4:00 Chat Show Ek Cup Cha

4:30 Expedition to the Animal Kingdom

5:00 Circus Circus

5:30 Drishti

5:50 Aiker Potrikay

6:00 Ekushey Headlines

6:05 Classic Cartoons

6:30 Charidike

7:00 Bolte Chai

7:30 Ekushey News

8:00 Drama Serial: Bondhon

8:30 Drama

9:30 Shorashori

10:30 BTV News

11:00 Ekushey Nightly News

3:45 Lethal Weapon 4

## STAR PLUS (INDIA)

10:30 Woodland Bollywood News

11:00 Geet Bahar

11:30 Geetanjali (Jeetendra, Rekha)

3:00 Woodland Bollywood News

3:30 Dil Daulat Duniya (Rajesh Khanna, Sadhana, Om Prakash)

7:00 Geet Bahar

7:30 Rang Bangri Laila Majnu (Rishi Kapoor, Ranjeeta)

11:30 Woodland Bollywood News

12:00 Daadi Maa (Ashok Kumar, Bina Rai)

12:30 Daadi Maa (Contd...)

3:00 Geet Bahar

3:30 Vardhan (Vinod Mehra, Reena Roy)

6:30 Trilok Sundari (Madhavi, Narsimha Raju)

9:30 Asia Today/Asia Business Report

10:30 Talking Movies

11:30 Earth Report

12:30 Hardtalk

1:00 Holiday

2:30 Reporters

3:30 Hardtalk

4:30 PHYS WRLD

5:30 Reporters

6:30 Wheels

7:15 World Business Report

8:00 Asia Today Inc Asia Business Report

8:30 Asia Today/World Business Report

9:30 Asia Today/Asia Business Report

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