

# Shahbagh fountain to be resurrected

SULTANA RAHMAN

The Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) plans to rebuild the fountain at Shahbagh, one of the landmark icons of the capital city, only days after the Board had demolished it.

Quamrul Islam Siddiqui, executive director of DTCB, informed that they were thinking of reconstructing the fountain but not at its original location. It will be a replica of the one that had been brought down.

DTCB members suggested relocating the fountain to the southeastern corner of the busy Shahbagh intersection near the floating flower market adjacent to the Suhrawardy Udyan.

"We had to demolish the fountain as it was made of concrete. Had it been built with iron or steel like the SAARC

fountain, we could have easily lifted it and placed it somewhere else," said Siddiqui.

Sources say that the DTCB had no other option but to level the four-decade old roundabout in order to ensure smooth flow of traffic.

"The traffic congestion at Shahbagh intersection is more pronounced than some other parts of the city because of the presence of non-motorised transport (NMT). In any case, considering the volume of traffic here, no measure would have worked keeping the roundabout intact," said a DTCB official.

A DTCB study shows that every hour some 3,650 vehicles move towards Shahbagh while around 2,450 vehicles cross the intersection to head towards Farm Gate. The intersection needed major adjustments to cope with the ever-growing pressure of traffic, officials observed.

But for city dwellers, the demolition of the fountain came as a shock. Architects, historians, city planners and commuters all expressed disappointment at such an unceremonious uprooting of a piece of history.

"If you pull out the *Shapla* figure from the roundabout in Motijheel, the entire area will lose its character. The fountain at Shahbagh is like that. It had its own history. Its destruction is a matter of extreme pain for all citizens," said Mosharaf Ahmed, 65, who has lived in Dhaka all his life.

According to historians, the fountain was built sometime in the 1960s on the occasion of

the arrival of Queen Elizabeth II to East Pakistan. It was also the first roundabout in Dhaka.

"As far as I can remember, Queen Elizabeth stayed at the Sugandha (present Foreign Ministry office) guest house and did cross Shahbagh area during her visit," recalls Professor Muntasir Mamun, a historian and a specialist on Dhaka.

"It had extreme significance as the roundabout linked Tejgaon, Ramna and the Dhaka University campus. If you watch local films of the 60s and 70s, you will invariably come across shots of the fountain. It has always been an integral symbol of Dhaka.

"Under the name of modernisation and development, we are bringing down instruments that recall the Dhaka's past. The linkage between generations is getting lost and our children stand to live in a rootless city," said Professor Mamun.

More than 20 roundabouts in Dhaka have been identified by the DTCB as major causes of traffic congestion. That is why the Board has taken steps to demolish roundabouts in prominent places at a cost of Tk 1.1 crore.

"We will call tenders for reconstruction of the fountain very soon," assured the DTCB executive director but that did not impress many.

"You cannot rebuild history. The history associated with the fountain can never be brought back," said Professor Mamun.

# When fingers talk ...

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Standing beside a busy road one afternoon, Sadia was engrossed in her cellphone to notice anything around her. She was fumbling with it moving her fingers rapidly on the keypad of the phone. "R u cumin?" She keyed a short message to her friend. An instant reply and the appointment fixed.

Mobile phones were introduced to the country in 1993. It was then only a telephone where one could be located on the move.

The introduction of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) gave a boost to mobile users, first with the inclusion of voice mail, where a message could be recorded if the person was out of reach. Then came the Short Messaging Service -- SMS as it is called where messages could be sent and received instantly.

GrameenPhone (GP) being the first company to introduce SMS found the service popular among all mobile phone users, especially teenagers. Sending message is quite a common sight with all users making use of the service to its maximum.

"The present use has increased 50 percent this year," said GP's customer relations officer. "The increase is nine messages a day compared to six last year," he added. The scenario



changed rapidly over the years. People were unaware of such facilities a few years ago, but now it has become an everyday activity as most can be seen riding in the SMS wave like other parts of the world.

Popularising the slogans of advertisements by mobile phone companies, SMS makes fingers do the talking. "Expressing happiness, good wishes, sorrow or condolences are all at the finger tips," said Tahmina Begum, a college student. Tahmina believes SMS communication saves time. "If you cannot contact a person immediately because s/he is busy, you can just send in a SMS," she added.

Conveying messages of romance, showing affection turned out easier after the launch of this service. "I cannot talk to my girlfriend on the mobile all the time as there are people around and the conversation may be overheard, but I convey my feelings through SMS," blushed Mamun Ahmed of Mohammadpur.

SMS is not only used by the young, seniors count on it this advantage as well.

"SMS's are convenient during official meetings," said Parvez, an employee of a foreign bank. "One cannot talk on the cellphone at such times," he said, adding that "one should be cautious when sending these mes-

sages or else you will end up sending the message 'luv u' to your boss instead of your wife," one of his colleagues recalled.

The popularity of SMS lies also with the fact that they are much cheaper than calls themselves. "I can send out more information than a phone call for Tk 2.00 only," said Asma Yasmin, a Dhaka University student. "Prepaid mobile call a minute is Tk 7."

Most SMS users believe it is the cheapest way of communicating with those living abroad. "I use the SMS to contact my relatives in London," said Bipasha Haque, a university teacher.

Sending SMS from one person to another is not the only attraction for users. They are also hooked on the options of "SMS content push and pull. Be it horoscopes, jokes or love quotes, a user can pull any content by sending an SMS to a certain number.

"Our push and pull service became famous because of cricket," said Faisal Alim, Chairman of Trade Textile Bangladesh.com, (TTBC) the only content provider in the country which has been hired by GrameenPhone to provide content on their behalf. He added that they are getting good response after introducing ring tone service where a user can download different ring tones by sending an SMS to a prescribed number.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

# Slum fires kill 13 in last 14 months

CITY CORRESPONDENT

At least 13 people died in 24 fire incidents in slums in Dhaka between January 2003 and March 2004, reveals a report by Ain-O-Shalish Kendra (ASK).

The ASK report was based on articles of fire incidents published in different national dailies.

Among the deceased, five were children, the report said. A 7-year-old burnt to death at Poka Miar Bosti in Demra while two minor brothers met the same fate at Jheelpar

Bosti in South Badda in January last year.

The report mentioned that 8,126 shanties were gutted while around Tk 2.58 crore was spent as aid to casualties.

Reasons behind the fire incidents were different, the report said. In some cases it was hand-made or kerosene stoves and sometimes mosquito coils that originated the fire, while in other areas arson was allegedly the cause.

Dwellers of Section-6 in Pallabi alleged that some miscreants on behalf of DESCO torched the slum, as it was a disputed land.

# DIARRHOEA BREAKS OUT

Scores of diarrhoea patients are being admitted to International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh at Mahakhali for the last few days. The disease broke out in the city mainly due to rising summer heat and crisis of safe drinking water.



SK ENAMUL HAQ

## healthouting, taxicab & train timing

### HEALTH

#### Hospitals

**Heart**  
National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD),  
- 9130800, 9122560-59

**Burn**  
Dhaka Medical College Hospital  
Burn Unit-8626812-6

**Cancer**  
National Cancer Institute-8014914,  
8826561-65  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib  
Medical University-8612550-4,  
861455-9

**Diabetes**  
Diabetic Research Hospital  
(BIRDEM)- 9661551-5,  
8616641-50

**Mother & Child Care**  
Shishu Hospital- 9119119,  
8116061-62  
Azampur Mother & Child Health

Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980  
**Eye**  
Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794,  
9119315  
National Eye Hospital- 8117202,  
8114807

**Dental**  
Dental College -9002035

**Orthopaedics**  
National Orthopaedics (Pangu)  
Hospital- 9114075, 9112150

**General**  
Dhaka Medical College Hospital-  
8626812-6  
Rushmono General Hospital-  
8317819  
Holy Family Hospital-  
8311731-25  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib  
Medical University Hospital-  
8612550-4, 8614545-9  
Bangladesh Medical College &  
Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,

Shamarita Hospital- 9131901  
Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800,  
9122560-69  
Salimullah Medical Collage  
Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6  
Cholera Research Hospital  
(ICDRB)- 8811751-60  
Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135

**Blood Bank**  
Red Crescent Centre- 9116563  
Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040  
Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061,  
7310061, 7319022  
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital-  
8626812-9

**Eye Bank**  
Sandhani International Eye Bank-  
8614040

**Ambulances For  
Dead Body**  
Anzumam Mafidul Islam (Kakrail  
9336611, Gandaria 7319808,  
7318166,  
Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

### MARKET CLOSED

Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday  
Elephant Road-Friday  
Bishal Center-Friday  
Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday  
Polwell Market-Friday  
BCS Computer City-Friday  
Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.  
Rajaxmi Complex-Friday  
Stadium Market-Friday  
Bangabazar Market-Friday  
National Museum-Thursday  
Ahsan Manzil-Thursday.  
New Market-Tuesday  
Gausia Market-Tuesday  
Mouchak Market-Sunday  
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday  
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday  
Eastern Plaza-Sunday  
Farmview Super Market-Sunday  
Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday  
Dhaka Zoo-Sunday  
Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

### TAXI CAB

**Yellow Cab**  
Navana 9558065  
Salida 9344477, 0171620881  
Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191  
Cab One 7113282-3  
Nihon 8624741-2  
Orion 9347277  
Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611  
Capital 9352847

### TRAIN TIMING

**Subarna Express** Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm  
**Mahanagar Prabhati** Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am  
**Mahanagar Godhuli** Leaves Dhaka at 3-05 pm  
**Turna** Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm  
**Parabat Express** Leaves Dhaka at 6-30 am  
**Joyantika Express** Leaves Dhaka at 12-30 pm  
**Upaban Express** Leaves Dhaka at 9-30 pm  
**Tista Express** Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am  
**Ekata Express** Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm  
**Upakul Express** Leaves Dhaka at 1-35 pm  
**Padma Express** Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

**Union** 8130485  
**Kool** 0171826731  
**Black Cab**  
**Cab Ex** 9358401  
**Cabline** 8321162  
**JBS Cab** 019364575  
**Sajan** 018126036  
**Anudip** -- 8125285 and 8127611  
**Cab One** 7113282-3

**Palki** 0171052500  
**Cab I** 7113282  
**Jatri** 0171540074  
**Nipun** 9572277  
**R-Cab** 8914782  
**Star Cab** 9571919  
**Shihab** 018202477 & 018228675  
**KGN** 8620011

Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm  
Reaches Chittagong at 2-55 pm  
Reaches Chittagong at 9-11 pm  
Reaches Chittagong at 7-05 am  
Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm  
Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm  
Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am  
Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm  
Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-55  
Reaches Noakhali at 1-35 pm  
Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm

### LIBRARY & INFO

#### Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

**Central Public Library-** 8626001-4,  
**Shishu Academy-** 9564128  
**Shilpakala Academy-** 8614673  
**Bangla Academy-** 8619550  
**Islamic Foundation-** 9550280,  
9556407  
**Nazrul Institute-** 9114602  
**Ford Foundation-** 8116133  
**Alliance Francaise-** 8611557  
**British Council-** 8618867-8,  
8618905-7  
**Community Development Library-**  
8113769, 8113604  
**Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka-**  
9126525-6  
**Indian Information Centre &  
Cultural Library-** 8615096  
**The Russian Cultural Centre-**  
9116314, 9118531, 9118314  
**Drik Photo Gallery-** 9120125,  
8112954, 8123412