



(L) Today, the ochre gate, one of Dhaka's most important monuments, stands in all its old grandeur near Doyel Chattar. (R) This historical artefact, Bibi Mariam, did many rounds around the city from being at Sadarghat, and Osmani Udyan. After going through the metal conservation process and restoring it to its original colour, it is now situated beside Dhaka Gate.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DHAKA GATE

the city's new splendour

RBR

I have crossed the Dhaka University campus and its adjoining areas like Shishu Academy, the Centre for Renewable Energy Research, and the mausoleum of three leaders so many times but never for once noticed the architectural splendour standing hidden somewhere there – the Dhaka Gate.

Now that this gate has been renovated and given back its former glory, I registered its presence for the first time even though it has been standing there quietly as a testament to the long history of our beloved Dhaka.

In 2023, Dhaka South City Corporation took the initiative to restore the historical Dhaka Gate. It commissioned a project aiming to restore the original structure and create a new public plaza under the supervision of a conservation specialist and direction by a prominent historian.

This structure of great architectural importance is not Islamic, Hindu or colonial, rather it is a mix of three styles. Indo-Gothic, Mughal-Gothic, Neo-Mughal or Indo-Islamic style is what makes the Indo-Saracenic architecture.

"The jalli or perforated screen is traditionally Bengal design, for the air to pass. The pillars are from colonial reference and the dome in amla-kalasa



Dhaka gate, before the renovation project.

or pitcher design is from the Islamic era," says Dr Abu Sayeed M Ahmed, the project's conservation specialist.

He is also a professor and dean of the Faculty of Environmental Science and Design, University of Asia Pacific.

"We tried to restore the gate using all local building materials and the traditional way of construction. We used lime or chun, betel nut juice or kosh or juice, treacle or chita gur and mixed it with powdered brick or shurki to make the plaster in ancient construction style. This wards off bugs. The floor material of the place is Modhpara granite. We kept the trees and did the landscape around it," Ahmed says.

"We wanted a public space for people to rest and enjoy the evening. As part



Bibi Mariam cannon inside the Osmani Udyan.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

of the beautification, we brought the cannon, Bibi Mariam, which was originally used in Mir Jumla's Assam war. This historical artefact did many rounds around the city from being at Sadarghat, and Osmani Udyan. After going through the metal conservation process and restoring it to its original colour, it is now in its current place.

"To clarify one point, I must say that the cannon has no relation to the gate. The two have separate historical prominence," he explains.

The Dhaka gate has its share of historical confusion. Some say as part of hearsay that Mir Jumla, Mughal Subahdar of Bengal during 1660-1663 constructed this gate to mark the Mughal Northern territory of Dhaka and thus it

was believed to be called Mir Jumla Gate. However, there is no historical evidence to the claim as explained by historian Muntassir Mamoon.

"But the story also goes towards the decline of the Mughal era and the start of the East India Company's reign. The entire area where the gate stands, adjoining Suhrawardy Udyan formerly known as Ramna Race Course ground was known as Bagh-e-Badshahi. The royal garden was mostly covered in Jungle.

"In 1825, Charles Dawes, who served as the magistrate of Dhaka, cleared the area and constructed a road from here to Shahbagh, erecting a gate at the road's entrance; and it was called Ramna Gate," Mamoon explains.

During the late colonial period, the gate endured severe damage, losing the smaller two turrets at both ends and all the finials above the turrets.

Later Muhammad Azam Khan (1960-62), the then governor of East Pakistan, broke down its eastern wing and placed it near the Shishu Academy to widen the road during the Martial Law reign. By this time, it was called Dhaka Gate.

Today, the ochre gate, one of Dhaka's most important monuments, stands in all its old grandeur near Doyel Chattar.

The restoration work is part of DSCC's efforts to promote culture and heritage preservation in the city.

34,000MT of potatoes to be imported from India

UNB, Dhaka

Aiming to rein in the runaway price of potatoes, the government has approved the import of 34,000 metric tonnes of potatoes through the Hili land port from India.

The 49 traders will be able to start importing the potatoes from Saturday or Sunday, said Yusuf Ali, deputy assistant officer of the plant contamination control centre at Hili land port, yesterday.

Shahidul Islam, one of the traders, said potatoes are being sold for Tk 40-45 per kg at the retail level, which is abnormally high for this time of the year. The government decision might help the government to gain some control over the price ahead of Ramadan, he said.

Over 100 Rohingyas flee Malaysian camp after riot

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

More than 100 Rohingya refugees escaped a detention centre in Malaysia after a riot broke out, with one man killed after being hit by a vehicle on a highway as he fled, police said yesterday.

Rohingyas experience persecution in their predominantly Buddhist homeland of Myanmar, with many fleeing to affluent, Muslim-majority Malaysia or refugee camps in Bangladesh.

They often endure harrowing, months-long sea journeys to arrive in Malaysia by boat or sneak into the country via its porous border with Thailand.

If caught, they are often sent to detention centres that rights groups say are typically overcrowded and filthy.

A total of 115 Rohingya migrants and 16 others – all of them men – rioted in their detention building before escaping the Bidor temporary immigration depot in northern Perak state late Thursday, local police chief Mohamad Naim Asnawi confirmed to AFP.

Resorts, house gutted in Sajek fire

UNB, Rangamati

A fire in Rangamati's Sajek yesterday gutted four establishments – two resorts, one dwelling house, and a shop.

Abdul Awal, senior assistant superintendent of Rangamati (Sajek circle) police, said the fire broke out around 11:30pm at Meghchaya resort and spread to the adjacent Foringi resort, a house owned by one Bhuban Tripura and a shop.

On information, police, army, and BGB members went to the spot and extinguished the blaze after two hours with the help of the local people.

Primarily it is suspected that the fire might have originated from a fireplace meant to keep people warm.

Chaithuang Aung Chowdhury Joy, vice president of the Sajek Cottage Owners Association, said all the tourists are safe.

However, the extent of the losses caused by the fire could not be ascertained yet.

Cancer increasing in Bangladesh, may double in 2050

FROM PAGE 1

cancers are most common among women.

Bangladesh, like the rest of the world, will observe World Cancer Day tomorrow. However, there is no national data on the disease in Bangladesh.

Professor M Nizamul Haque, director of the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, said, "We need to commence an epidemiological study immediately to see the whole picture of cancer in the country. We have some hospital-based data, but it is not complete."

Noted cancer epidemiologist Habibullah Ruskin said, "There is no

denying that the numbers of patients and fatalities are rising. But it is tough to say the extent of its rise without exact data."

There must be a national cancer control strategy under which there will be detailed plans of action and programmes, he said, adding that a proper cancer registration and screening system and treatment protocol must be in place.

"It is high time we bring all the cancer programmes under a single umbrella so that we can have proper data," he said.

The government last year launched a school-level HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccination programme to eliminate cervical

cancer-related deaths, said Prof Haque, adding that hepatitis B and other vaccines are also preventing cancer-related deaths.

The WHO report says an estimated 9.7 million people died of cancer in 2022.

WHO also published survey results from 115 countries, showing a majority of countries do not adequately finance priority cancer and palliative care services, as part of universal health coverage.

The new estimates available on IARC's Global Cancer Observatory show that 10 types of cancer collectively comprised around two-thirds of new cases and deaths globally in 2022.

Lung cancer was the most commonly occurring cancer worldwide with 2.5 million new cases, followed by 2.3 million breast, 1.9 million colorectal, 1.5 million prostate, and 970,000 stomach cancer cases.

Lung cancer caused 1.8 million deaths, colorectal cancer 900,000, liver cancer 760,000, breast cancer 670,000 and stomach cancer 660,000.

Freddie Bray, head of cancer surveillance at IARC, said, "Those who have the fewest resources to manage their cancer burdens will bear the brunt of the global cancer burden."

Family preparing for qulkhwani now, not wedding

FROM PAGE 1

His second son Shamiul Islam's wife Jannatul Ferdous and mother-in-law were at the house. They were married a year ago, but did not have a formal reception. That's why the joint-reception was planned.

Jannatul said that she was supposed to come to her in-laws' house on Thursday dressed as a bride.

Monirul's wife Rita Khatun said, "After boarding the ferry, Monirul told me over the phone around 11:30pm

that it will take him half an hour to get home. When he didn't come after almost two hours, I kept calling him. Later, the police answered the phone and said he was dead."

Ahmadipur Highway Police Station Sub-Inspector M Al Mahmood said Shamiul filed a case accusing a truck driver named Golzar Hossain with Goalanda Ghat Police.

He added that police were looking for the driver.

Bangladesh-Myanmar border eerily quiet

FROM PAGE 1

He added that he wasn't so worried about the ongoing fighting in Myanmar anymore, saying that the situation in the union was now calm.

According to locals, gunfights between the Myanmar military junta and the Arakan Army have intensified along the border in recent weeks.

Md Moinuddin, a resident of Tambru, said locals in his village were constantly worried about getting caught in the crossfire.

"We cannot freely move around our village. I was abruptly awakened to the loud sounds of mortar shell explosions and gunshots early Thursday morning.

On January 28, BGB 34 Battalion, in a press release, said around 13 mortar shells launched from Myanmar had landed on the Bangladesh side until then.

As of Thursday, at least another six mortar shells fell on the Bangladesh side, according to reports from different news outlets.

Sources said that the Arakan Army captured all border outposts of the Myanmar Border Guard Police situated opposite Naikhongchhari upazila.

The military junta and border

police were under siege at a military camp, which locals call the "Right Camp", opposite the Tambru BGB camp in Ghumdhum.

The Arakan Army fighters were now trying to capture the camp, often triggering heavy gunfights.

Woman

FROM PAGE 1

"He [Ashiqur] has a considerable amount of loans. It triggered a family feud. There was no peace in his family. Ashiqur and his wife used to have quarrels frequently," Jaba added.

Tanvirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Nilphamari Police Station, police were investigating the incident.

Contacted, Resident Medical Officer Abdur Rahim of Nilphamari General Hospital said the bodies went sent to the morgue for autopsies. The cause of their deaths could be known after getting the autopsy report.

Ashiqur was undergoing treatment at the ENT department of Rangpur Medical College Hospital, said Abdul Azim, head of the department, adding that the patient condition was yet to be stable.

[Our correspondents in Nilphamari and Dinajpur contributed to this report.]

Victims made to walk thru jungles, wade canals

FROM PAGE 1

She said a broker charged his son Tk 4 lakh, but could not give details.

Sazzat was on his first trip to Malaysia where his elder brother is working, she added.

According to Thai media reports, each of the arrestees paid between Tk 4 lakh and Tk 4.5 lakh to brokers.

Fahad Pervez Bosunia, counsellor (labour welfare) at the Bangladesh embassy in Thailand, said they were aware of the arrests and taking necessary steps.

People working on prevention of human trafficking alleged that syndicate members manage immigration clearance for the workers at the Dhaka airport by bribing a section of immigration police members.

If workers leave the country on tourist visas, the authorities must have a strong mechanism to monitor why and where they are going as their arrests taint Bangladesh's image abroad, they added.

In case anyone does not return home on expiry of tourist visa, the immigration department must

report it to the authorities concerned, they said.

Trafficking to Malaysia has been going on for many years. When the authorities intensify watch on a certain route, the transnational trafficking syndicates look for new routes.

Brokers are now taking job seekers to Sri Lanka and Nepal first, from where they are moved to Vietnam and Cambodia. Then they are forced to sneak into Thailand before being transported to Malaysian border on cars and trucks, said officials working on controlling human trafficking.

Some traffickers are also taking job seekers to Thailand through Myanmar. Many of them are being arrested in Thailand and Cambodia, they added.

Several years ago, many fortune-seekers died in a boat capsized in the sea on their way to Malaysia while some other died of starvation and torture in the deep forest of Thailand where members of transnational trafficking syndicates held them hostage for ransom.

News of arrests of Bangladeshi

fortune seekers quite often makes headlines in the international media.

According to media reports, 19 Bangladeshi migrants were arrested with four Thai nationals in Songkhla province of Thailand on June 22 last year. On September 23, seven Bangladeshis, disguised as Buddhist monks, were arrested while they were being taken to Malaysian border. They entered Thailand from Myanmar.

Besides, Cambodian department of immigration arrested two Bangladeshi trafficking gang members, including Sajjad Al Faisal, after it detained 51 Bangladeshi victims in two hotels in Phnom Penh on January 11 this year. The victims are now under the shelter of the social welfare ministry.

Marina Sultana, director (programme) of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), said taking people to Malaysia promising jobs has been going on for many years.

"Once organised syndicates used sea routes from Cox's Bazar and many fortune-seekers had died on their way to Malaysia. The syndicates often