



What Dhaka people look for in an apartment

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

If you live in Dhaka and are not from around here, chances are you had to look for an apartment one time or another. Apartment hunting in Dhaka is a special kind of punishment. And it's not just the city; part of that reason is our own expectations.

People ponder a lot before renting a new apartment, and for good reason. This will be your abode for the foreseeable future, so it is important that it has that homely feeling. And it is that "homely" feeling that differs from person to person.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Some people prefer a busy city vibe. They want ease of access, clubs, shopping malls, and all the other city perks within their reach. Others are a bit more specific. They want a feeling of luxury and status, an air of poshness; for them Gulshan, Banani or Dhanmondi is usually at the top of their list.

Some people like a view. The feeling of sipping a warm cup of coffee in the morning, sitting on your balcony is truly a blessing. It might not seem like much of a demand to the rest of the country but for Dhaka, this is more than a demand; it's almost like a wish. And if you have lived in the city long enough, you know how harsh, yet true,



PHOTO: MD MONOWARUL KABIR MILON

this is. For Dhaka, the usual sight out your balcony is the sight of another balcony. Or worse; a decaying concrete wall.

Some look for a well-maintained roof. But many are disappointed because the roofs stay either locked or out of bounds because even the "chilekotha" is also rented.

But perhaps none of these are as important as the apartment itself. The room, and the space it offers you. For many, it's about finding the apartment that will nest them and their family comfortably. For most in the capital

city, it's the opposite: it's about fitting everything in the apartment that you find because more often than not, the rent puts a dent on your wallet.

THE TRULY BLESSED ONES

Nobody in the city is as blessed as the person who can walk to his office. Most people have to commute through the rush hour, but there are those who somehow managed to find an apartment close enough to their workplace.

This has become one of the things that people look for in an apartment

these days. How close is it to the metro station? And the apartments near the stations have become more enticing than khichuri on a rainy day.

Another group of lucky people live in the Old Dhaka, where one can still find a thriving community. Many people get depressed after moving in Dhaka because of how individualistic life gets here. People do not know who lives next door. If you want to escape that and get a sense of belonging in a community, 'Old Dhaka' is where it still remains.

THE ONES WHO CAN'T BE CHOOSERS

Bachelors; the group of people who are dismissed so vehemently in Dhaka that they can't be choosers when it comes to apartments. They are lucky to find a place that allows them to stay in the first place. For them, the only factors to consider are: "Is it somewhat near to where I need to be?" and "How much is the rent?" along with a follow up question, "What is the eating arrangement here?" And that concludes their list of demands when it comes to looking for a place to stay.

The journey to finding the right apartment is a long and tedious one, and usually very exhausting. But it gets better once you are settled in. And if you can hit it off with your landlord, then it's smooth sailing from there.

Man held for raping, impregnating minor daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrokona*

Police yesterday arrested a man in Netrokona for allegedly raping his 16-year-old daughter, resulting in her pregnancy.

The 48-year-old suspect is a resident of Purbadhala upazila.

Earlier in the day, the victim, with the help of local community leaders, filed a rape case against her father at Purbadhala Police Station.

Following the complaint, police arrested the accused around 5:30pm.

According to the case statement and police sources, the victim's mother divorced the man seven years ago. The girl is their only child.

The victims had been working at a house in Dhaka. About six months ago, she returned to her father's home. She was raped on multiple occasions then, the case read.

She was sent to another house about two months ago for work in Mymensingh, where she found out she was pregnant.

Her father brought her back and threatened her not to disclose the matter.

Purbadhala Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdullah Al Mamun told The Daily Star, "A case has been filed. The victim's medical examination and other necessary legal procedures are underway."

Ecuador judge killed amid crime crackdown

AFP, *Quito*

An Ecuadoran judge was fatally shot during a state of emergency that had been declared to combat organized crime, Ecuador's judicial oversight body said.

It called the killing of Lady Pachar a "serious attack against justice and the rule of law in Ecuador" in a statement released Monday.

Pachar was shot that day while traveling by car to a gym in the southwestern city of Machala.

Her two bodyguards were not with her when the incident took place, according to police in Machala, which is the capital of El Oro province bordering Peru.

Jamaat, NCP set to skip special JS committee

FROM PAGE 1

The BNP had signed the charter and publicly supported reforms, but its MPs refused to take oath as members of the Constitution Reform Council, which was proposed to bring constitutional changes in line with the July charter, he said.

Zubair said the Jamaat-led alliance would continue protests inside parliament and on the streets. They have planned rallies in seven divisional cities, from May 16 in Rajshahi. The rallies will continue till July.

A grand rally in Dhaka is likely to be held either in September or October.

Contacted, BNP Standing Committee Member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said, "We are waiting for Jamaat's response. If they do not agree, we will discuss the matter in the party forums and decide our next course of action."

NCP Senior Joint Convener Ariful Islam echoed Jamaat's stance, saying the party favours a reform council over a parliamentary committee.

"... There is no possibility of our participation [in the committee]," he

told this newspaper, adding that the NCP has already been carrying out joint activities across districts to press for the council's formation.

On April 29, Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman told parliament that he and Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed had proposed forming the special committee.

He said the ruling party had prepared a list of 12 members -- seven from BNP and five from Gono Adhikar Parishad, Ganosambhati Andolan, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), and independents. It asked the opposition to nominate five.

Highlighting the opposition's strength, he noted they hold 26 percent of seats in parliament.

On March 31, the treasury bench dismissed the July Charter Implementation Order as "a document of endless deceit and national betrayal" and recommended forming an all-party committee.

In response, Shafiqur proposed convening the Constitution Reform Council instead. The debate took place during discussion on an adjournment motion calling for the council's formation.

Under the July Charter Implementation Order, MPs of the 13th parliament were expected to serve as lawmakers and reform council members to address 48 constitutional amendment proposals within 180 working days.

They were required to take two oaths -- one as lawmakers and another as council members.

The council's first session was to be convened within 30 days of election results, but it has yet to be formed.

BNP MPs refused to take the council oath, while 77 MPs from the Jamaat-led alliance took both.

The July National Charter, drafted by the National Consensus Commission, outlined the 48 proposals for constitutional reform.

The BNP submitted notes of dissent on several key provisions, supporting amendments based on its own position.

Jamaat, the NCP, and other opposition parties favour implementing all 48 proposals through a Constitution Reform Council, which was endorsed in a referendum with a majority "yes" vote.

Ecneec okays Padma barrage mega project

FROM PAGE 1

will also be built near the barrage at a cost of Tk 743 crore as part of the project.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) yesterday approved the project, setting 2033 as the target year for completion. The project will be implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board under the Ministry of Water Resources.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman presided over the meeting held at the Secretariat.

The Padma-dependent region has long suffered from water shortages due to upstream diversions, and the project is expected to help address chronic water shortages in the country's southwest and northwest regions, where reduced dry-season flow in the Padma has affected agriculture, fisheries, navigation, forestry and biodiversity.

Although the project will cover about 37 percent of Bangladesh's land area, spanning 26 districts and 163 upazilas across four divisions, under the first phase, 19 districts and 120 upazilas across four divisions -- Khulna, Dhaka, Rajshahi, and

Barishal divisions -- will be benefitted, according to the project documents.

The first phase would be paid from the government's own funds.

The barrage will feature 78 spillways, 18 undersluice gates, two fish passes, a navigation lock, guide bunds, and approach embankments.

Spillways regulate excess water flow and prevent flooding by releasing water safely downstream. Undersluice gates control sediment and maintain water levels near the barrage, especially during high discharge.

Fish passes allow migratory fish to move upstream and downstream. Navigation lock enables boats and vessels.

Guide bunds stabilise riverbanks and direct water flow toward the barrage structure. Approach embankments protect adjoining land and infrastructure from erosion and flooding while channelling water toward the barrage.

Hydropower plants will be set up at Padma barrage and Gorai off-take, which is the crucial entry point of the Gorai-Madhumati river. The plants will generate 113 megawatts of electricity.

According to project details, Tk 6,619 crore has been allocated for the construction of the Gorai off-take. Another hydropower plant will be set up at a cost of Tk 418 crore.

Two additional off-takes will be constructed at Chandana and Hisa rivers at a cost of Tk 202 crore.

An off-take is a structure designed to divert water from the upstream side of the barrage into a canal, distributary, or another river channel.

The project also includes Tk 2,878 crore for land acquisition and Tk 1,058 crore for dredging the Gorai and Madhumati rivers.

According to the Development Project Proposal (DPP), the project will be implemented over eight years. Of the total expenditure, Tk 822 crore will be spent in the next fiscal year, followed by Tk 2,120 crore in the subsequent year, Tk 4,067 crore in the third year, Tk 5,341 crore in the fourth year, and Tk 5,759 crore in the fifth year.

Including the Padma barrage project, the Ecneec approved nine new and revised projects involving a total estimated expenditure of Tk 36,696 crore.

Trump lands in China for summit with Xi

FROM PAGE 1

While en route to Beijing, Trump said on social media he would "be asking President Xi, a Leader of extraordinary distinction, to 'open up' China so that these brilliant people can work their magic".

Nvidia's Huang was a surprise late addition to the trip, joining the plane at a stopover in Alaska. China is currently banned under US national security rules from buying the cutting-edge AI chips that the company produces.

But Iran, trade and Taiwan loom over the highly anticipated meeting, which Trump had already delayed from March because of the war the United States and Israel started in the Middle East.

Before Trump's arrival, China yesterday issued a blunt warning to Washington, declaring that the "four red lines" in China-US relations must not be challenged.

In a strongly worded message posted on X, the Chinese Embassy in the United States said issues relating to Taiwan, democracy and human rights, political systems, and China's development rights were non-negotiable and formed the core boundaries in bilateral ties ahead of Trump's May 13-15 visit to China.

"The four red lines in China-US relations must not be challenged," the embassy stated, while also calling for a "strategic, constructive and stable" relationship between the two global powers.

In a post on X, the Embassy listed them as 'The Taiwan Question', 'Democracy and Human Rights', 'Paths and Political Systems' and

'China's Development Right.'

Visiting China for the first time since 2017 during his previous term, Trump is expected to receive a lavish welcome from Chinese authorities.

Trump and Xi will hold talks at 10:00am (0200 GMT) today in Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People.

The US president will also visit the historic Temple of Heaven, a world heritage site where China's emperors once prayed for good harvest.

The leaders will then enjoy a state banquet in the evening.

On Friday, they are set to have tea and a working lunch before Trump heads home.

As he departed the White House, Trump said he expected a "long talk" with Xi about the joint US-Israeli war with Iran, which sells most of its US-sanctioned oil to China.

But he also downplayed disagreements, telling reporters that "I don't think we need any help with Iran" from China and that Xi had been "relatively good" on the topic.

The Chinese foreign ministry said Wednesday it "welcomes" Trump's visit and that "China stands ready to work with the United States... to expand cooperation and manage differences".

The four-red lines in China-US relations must not be challenged, while also calling for a "strategic, constructive and stable" relationship between the two global powers.

Trump and Xi are set to discuss extending a one-year tariff truce, which the two leaders reached during their last meeting in South Korea in

October, although a deal is far from certain.

China's controls on rare earth and agriculture exports are also expected to be on the menu.

Trump has repeatedly touted a strong personal relationship with Xi, which he insisted on Monday would prevent a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, the self-ruled democracy claimed by Beijing.

While Trump said on Monday he would speak to Xi about US arms sales to Taiwan, the move marks a departure from historic US insistence that it will not consult Beijing on its support to the island.

His trip will be closely scrutinised by Taiwan and Asian allies for any sign of weakening US support.

Analysts say a successful outcome in the talks for Trump would likely need to be visible and easy to sell politically at home. That could include Chinese purchases of US goods, movement on tariffs, cooperation on Iran, or progress on rare earth exports.

For Xi, success would mean preserving stability without appearing to bow to Washington, while securing greater economic predictability and recognition of China as a global power.

A comprehensive trade deal seems unlikely because the structural sources of rivalry remain unresolved, said an analyst, adding that a limited agreement is more likely, potentially involving tariff pauses, purchase commitments, rare earth arrangements or a framework for future negotiations.

FROM PAGE 1

evening [April 10], locals told me that my husband had been detained. I rushed to the Coast Guard pontoon in the Thoda area and saw him being held."

She claimed eight to 10 men in Coast Guard uniform and six to seven in plainclothes were present on the pontoon. Miraj was taken into a room with tinted windows. About 30 minutes later, a speedboat arrived and carried him towards Harbaria, where a Coast Guard camp is located.

Mukta said she later contacted a local union parishad member, who gave her the Harbaria Coast Guard outpost number. "Someone answered and told me Miraj was detained for interrogation and a case would be filed against him."

The next morning, she went to the

Digraj Coast Guard base. "They asked us to wait. By afternoon, the new duty team told us they knew nothing about Miraj's detention," she said, adding that her phone number was later blocked by the coast guards.

"I just want to know where my husband is," she demanded.

Miraj's sister Liza Islam said while picking him up, Coast Guard members kept Miraj's motorbike at a local tea stall owned by Al Amin.

Contacted, Al Amin confirmed the bike was left to him and later taken back by Coast Guard personnel, though he could not recall the dates.

Lieutenant Commander Shamsul Arefin, operation officer of Coast Guard (West Zone, Mongla), categorically denied detaining Miraj.

"Miraj is a wanted person. We are currently looking for him. He is not in

our custody. If we had detained him, there would be no reason to hide it," he told this correspondent over the phone yesterday.

He added Miraj's name surfaced in a confessional statement by another arrested criminal, Samad, a member of a local gang.

"Samad had mentioned a few other names, two of whom were arrested subsequently," added the coast guard official.

Mongla Police Station Officer-in-Charge Atikur Rahman said, "A GD was filed about Miraj Sheikh's disappearance. His family members say he is still traceless. We are investigating the matter."

Asked if Miraj was accused in any criminal case, the OC said he did not know.

Measles cases cross 60,000; death toll 432

FROM PAGE 1

cases reached 60,206.

Meanwhile, one confirmed and seven suspected measles deaths were reported in the last 24 hours.

DGHS Director General Prof Pravath Chandra Biswas, at a press conference at its headquarters, said the emergency measles-rubella campaign has reached near its expected target.

According to official data, as of yesterday, 75,228 more children than the targeted 1,80,15,064 aged between six months and under five years have been vaccinated, meaning coverage has surpassed 100 percent of the target.

However, data shows coverage in Sylhet reached 97 percent and in Barishal 99 percent, indicating that

some children in the target group remain unvaccinated.

Explaining the matter, Prof Zahid Raihan, additional director general (administration) of DGHS, said the campaign target had been set on the basis of estimates, but the actual number of children requiring vaccination turned out to be higher. In addition, some children above the age bracket of five may have received the vaccine this time.

"Together, these reasons may explain why vaccination coverage exceeded 100 percent in certain divisions," he told this correspondent after the press conference.

The campaign will continue till May 20 to bring the unvaccinated children under coverage, he added.

At the press conference, SM Ziauddin Hyder, special assistant to the prime minister for health, said immunity takes three to four weeks to develop after vaccination and expressed hope that measles cases would begin to decline sharply by the end of this month. "Losing children to measles in 2026 is a matter of shame for us."

Meanwhile, a group under the banner of 'Socheton Nagorik Samaj' yesterday formed a human chain in the capital's Dhanmondi 27 area, demanding trial of interim government chief adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and his health adviser Nurjahan Begum over the measles deaths and compensation for the victims' families.