



THINGS I MISS about Dhaka when away

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

It's been more than a decade since I have moved in Dhaka. Since then, I have spent only a few days away from Dhaka, and it has become such that I feel more comfortable at Dhaka than anywhere else. Which is ironic because there is so much about this city that irks me.

Every holiday, I make a journey back to my hometown. My time spent away from Dhaka can't be more than a few days at a time but even during those few days, there are things that I miss about Dhaka.

Food delivery

In the metropolitan city, we take it for granted and never think too much of it. But once you are in the suburbs or the village, you realise how useful this little perk is. Sure, some businesses in the small towns are now trying home delivery, but the convenience is nowhere near to what you get in Dhaka. And the choices when ordering food? You never know how badly you want that burger at 10PM until you are away from Dhaka.

Public transport and ride sharing

Frequent buses, metro rail, a biker or car for hire; these are our daily necessities in Dhaka. On your way to work, you get a number of choices to pick from. You can find a seat in a human hauler, you can try to fight



for a space in one of many buses, you can battle for a breathing room in the metro or you can choose to spend more and get a bike that will drop you where you want to go.

Outside of Dhaka, there are very few places where you get as many and as consistent choices. Specially in villages, movements can really be a struggle unless you have your own motorbike. I miss the choice of transports when I'm not in Dhaka.

Late night buzz

I'm not saying it is a good thing to stay up late, but within the limited 24

hours of each day, it often tends to get late before I call it a night. Sometimes, I find myself wishing for a cup of tea, or a midnight snack. The thing about Dhaka is that no matter what time it is, you can always find a cup of tea. And if you are motivated enough, you can find a full meal at any hour of the night. It seems like the city never truly falls asleep. Whenever I am away from the city, I find myself wanting that late night presence.

Street lamps

It may sound stupid to many. Others might say it is a foolish attempt to

romanticise Dhaka, but I do miss the street lamps. Hear me out; it's not like street lamps are exclusive to Dhaka. They are found everywhere, even in remote villages. But I enjoy watching the sight of street lamps in a straight path as I take a lazy walk. Especially after a heavy rain, there is something entrancing about the way Dhaka streets look. Glistening asphalt, blurry lights and contrasting colours; It makes me feel like the whole world is inside a watercolour painting.

My campus

Most of all, I miss my campus whenever I am not in Dhaka. Sure, I do not live in a dorm anymore. In fact, I live away from the campus these days. But living in Dhaka, I always know that whenever I feel said, or homesick, or just want to feel like I belong, Dhaka University is just a bike ride away. When I am away from Dhaka, it feels like there is this huge distance that separates me and my campus. It sounds mushy, exaggerated, even silly to many. But to me, it's a part of my existence.

Sure, I get annoyed at Dhaka several times a day. I have a thousand complaints about the city and a thousand more about its people. But it's also the city that has allowed me to find myself within its domain. So, ironic as it is, whenever I am not in Dhaka, I miss Dhaka.

EBOLA OUTBREAK

WHO confirms first recovery in DRC

Identifies treatments; vaccines to be tested in trials

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization (WHO) yesterday announced the first recovery of a confirmed Ebola patient in the outbreak raging in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"The DRC has said that on May 27, a patient recovered and left the hospital and has been discharged into the community," the WHO's Anais Legand told reporters, adding it was "the first one".

WHO said there are 906 suspected cases of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo, including 223 suspected deaths that are being investigated.

There have been 125 confirmed cases of Ebola in the DRC, including 17 confirmed deaths in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu.

There have also been seven confirmed cases of Ebola in Uganda, three of which were imported from the DRC, and one death. However, no community transmission has been reported, the WHO said.

Meanwhile, WHO recommended prioritising three experimental treatments for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, including Mapp Biopharmaceutical's MBP134, Regeneron's mAb114, and Gilead Sciences' antiviral remdesivir.

Japan sees record 5-year population drop: census

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's population dropped by a record 2.5 percent in the span of five years, census data showed yesterday, as the world's fourth-largest economy struggles to overcome demographic woes.

A preliminary tally of Japan's census, released every five years, found that the population slipped to 123 million people in 2025 -- more than three million fewer than when the survey was last carried out in 2020.

It was the biggest decrease since the twice-a-decade survey started in 1920, and more than triple the decline recorded between 2015 and 2020.

The data "once again confirmed the population decline in our nation is deepening," top government spokesman Minoru Kihara told reporters.

BNP walks tightrope amid global shocks

FROM PAGE 1

Abbasi, however, viewed the BNP's decision as pragmatic, saying the government acknowledged the USA's status as the world's primary economic powerhouse and its influence over institutions like the World Bank and IMF.

Bangladesh continues to enjoy a large trade surplus with the US, he said.

At the same time, relationship with the European Union remains critical for Bangladesh's transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status and access to GSP Plus trade facilities. The EU collectively imports nearly \$30 billion worth of Bangladeshi products annually.

"A major upcoming challenge involves balancing American interests with those of European partners," Abbasi said.

European actors have already questioned Dhaka's preference for Boeing while Airbus proposals remained pending.

TIES WITH INDIA

Relations with India, strained during the interim administration, have shown signs of both improvement and tension during the BNP government's first 100 days.

Former ambassador to Libya M Shafiqullah described India's early engagement with the BNP government as warm. Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman's first major bilateral visit was to India before travelling to China.

Yet, underlying tensions remain due to the anti-Bangladesh rhetoric during election campaigns in Assam and West Bengal. It prompted Dhaka to summon Indian Deputy High Commissioner Pawan Badhe in protest, while Delhi raised concerns over illegal immigration.

The unresolved Teesta water-sharing agreement and renewal of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty are likely to become major tests, Shafiqullah said.

Amena Mohsin argued that recent political changes in West Bengal may create a new opening because the BJP now governs both Delhi and Kolkata.

CHINA REMAINS ESSENTIAL

While engaging Washington and trying to repair ties with India, the BNP government has simultaneously maintained good relations with China, Bangladesh's largest infrastructure and development partner.

The most sensitive issue may emerge around the Teesta river management project.

"If Bangladesh proceeds with China, there is apprehension India might divert more water upstream," warned Shafiqullah, former senior research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

For now, Dhaka appears determined to maintain strategic flexibility, rather than align too closely with any single power bloc.

Still, one foreign policy analyst, requesting anonymity, said it remains unclear how effectively the BNP government will balance relations between Washington and Beijing.

QUESTIONS OVER PRIORITIES

A highly visible aspect of the government's diplomacy has been Khalilur Rahman's extensive overseas travel linked to Bangladesh's UNGA presidency campaign.

Supporters view the effort as an opportunity to elevate Bangladesh's diplomatic standing internationally.

Critics, however, question whether

prestige diplomacy, which does not provide much advantage to the country like the membership to UN Security Council does, risks overshadowing pressing bilateral and economic priorities.

POLICY STILL TAKING SHAPE

Analysts say while 100 days is too short to deliver a verdict on the BNP government's foreign policy, a broader pattern begins to emerge.

The government appears focused on rebuilding international confidence, practicing multi-alignment among major powers, and prioritising economic diplomacy over ideological positioning.

Amena Mohsin said Bangladesh is also trying to maintain an equidistant regional position. Its core policy remains neither Delhi or Rawalpindi.

Yet, several major issues remain largely untouched, particularly the Rohingya crisis, climate change, long-term migrant protection and institutional reform within Bangladesh's diplomatic system.

Shafiqullah argued that Bangladesh needs a more professional diplomatic corps where changes in government do not disrupt recruitment and transfers within the foreign ministry.

Abbasi said the success of the BNP government's foreign policy will depend on how effectively political leaders and bureaucrats synchronise policy.

They suggest that Bangladesh focus on strengthening the foreign office, improving coordination among ministries, and protecting interests related to exports, migrant welfare, climate change and foreign investment.

PM unhappy

FROM PAGE 1

Under Tarique Rahman's instruction, two regional executive officers of Dhaka North and South city corporations were withdrawn from their respective posts and attached to the Ministry of Public Administration with immediate effect.

The PM also ordered departmental action against them.

"The prime minister went out to see different development projects in the capital and the management of sacrificial animal waste. He expressed dissatisfaction as waste had not been removed in some places," State Minister for LGRD Mir Shahe Alam told the media.

The withdrawn officials are Kazi Saleh Mustanzir, regional executive officer of Zone-1 of Dhaka South City Corporation, and Sadekur Rahman, regional executive officer of Zone-5 of Dhaka North City Corporation.

Without informing anyone in advance, the prime minister himself drove through different parts of Dhaka for nearly four hours to inspect the animal waste cleaning situation.

State Minister Mir Shahe Alam, Dhaka South City Corporation Administrator Abdus Salam, and BNP National Executive Committee Special Secretary Muhammad Belayet Hossain Mridha accompanied the PM in his vehicle, according to the Prime Minister's Press Wing.

Meanwhile, Tarique has directed two city corporations to remove garbage, clean drainage points, and take necessary measures to prevent dengue within the next 48 hours.

If the instructions are not implemented within the deadline, the chief executive officers, chief waste management officers, and chief health officers of the two city corporations will be withdrawn from their posts and face disciplinary action.

Migrants try to flee

FROM PAGE 1

ordered the establishment of "holding centres" for "apprehended foreigners", including Bangladeshis and Rohingya, fuelling anxiety among the state's roughly 35 million Muslims.

"We have been asked to leave immediately, or the government will take stern action," said Hasina, 45, who worked at construction sites in Kolkata after entering India six years ago.

"We came to this city in search of a job. Now we want to return to Bangladesh, (but) we don't know what is waiting for us there," she said.

Her husband tried feeding their child scraps of leftover bread as families huddled in an unfinished building near the outpost, some without proper food for days.

The sudden influx followed word spreading among migrant communities that crossing into Bangladesh was possible from Hakimpur, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) east of Kolkata.

India shares a long and porous border with Bangladesh, where migration has historically been driven by economic hardship and longstanding family links. In Indian states that border Bangladesh, like West Bengal and Assam, undocumented migrants have formed an integral part of the informal workforce for years.

But activists say hundreds have been pushed across the border from Assam in recent months without due legal process, often based on ethnic profiling.

Animal waste

FROM PAGE 1

Government Primary School, in front of Central Plaza near the Mirpur-10 roundabout, East Monipur on Begum Rokeya Sarani, Road 2 of Mirpur-11 Journalists Residential Area, the road in front of Udayan School and College in Mirpur 10/D, Road 4 of Banani A Block, East Rampura, Hajipara, and Malibagh Chowdhurypara.

On-spot visits found animal tails, hooves, partially removed hides, horns, entrails, and skulls scattered in many places. Pools of animal blood were also visible in some areas.

Residents expressed frustration over the city corporations' failure to keep their promises.

Mujahidul Islam, a resident of Mirpur-11, said, "The joy of Eid has been ruined. Sacrificial waste has been lying in front of our house since Eid morning. The foul smell is so unbearable that we cannot even let our children go outside."

Sadia Rahman, a resident of Khilgaon, said, "Every year the city corporation promises quick waste removal, but we see the same situation in reality. Roads are still covered with blood and animal entrails."

Shariat Ullah, a resident of

Jafrabad in Mohammadpur, said, "We heard everything would be cleaned overnight. Now it is already noon, yet piles of waste are still lying beside the roads."

Ziauddin Alam, a resident of Dinanath Sen Road in Gendaria, said, "Leaving waste like this is causing environmental pollution. Faster action should have been taken."

Kamal Uddin, a resident of Nazirabazar, said, "People are supposed to feel comfortable during Eid. But now the whole area feels like a dumping ground."

Mahfuzur Rahman, a resident of East Rampura, said, "I came out early in the morning and still saw animal hides and blood on the streets. We heard about huge preparations, but the reality does not match the claims."

Responding to the allegations, DSCC Administrator Abdus Salam said waste removal operations were being carried out vigorously.

"We are committed to removing all waste as quickly as possible to ensure comfort for city dwellers. There may be problems in some places. Whenever we receive information, we are immediately sending workers there to clean the area," he said.

Zia's 45th death anniv today

FROM PAGE 1

is all set to mark the occasion with due respect and reverence.

"Tomorrow [Saturday] marks the 45th martyrdom anniversary of statesman Ziaur Rahman. As part of our announced eight-day programme, Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman will lead party leaders and activists in offering fateha and placing wreaths at Ziaur Rahman's grave at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar at 11:00am."

Rizvi said party flags will be kept at half-mast and black flags will be hoisted at the BNP central office and other party offices across the country from 6:00am on the day.

He said different associate bodies and professional groups of the party have undertaken various programmes, including discussions and photo exhibitions highlighting Ziaur Rahman's life and works.

The BNP leader added that party units across the country will observe the day with different events in memory of the party founder.

He said Tarique Rahman will distribute clothes and dry food items among poor people at several spots in Dhaka after visiting the grave.

"I think one spot has been fixed in each constituency under Dhaka north and south where clothes and dry food will be distributed," said Rizvi, who is also the PM's political adviser.

He said the prime minister is also expected to distribute food among the destitute in front of the Nayapaltan central office in the afternoon as part of programmes to be organised by five associate bodies and one affiliated organisation.

The BNP leader said milad and

doa mahfils will also be arranged in observance of the day.

He added that BNP leaders and activists have been wearing black badges as part of the eight-day programme. Special supplements have also been published in national newspapers, marking the anniversary.

BNP Media Cell member Sayrul Kabir Khan told UNB that Tarique Rahman will attend all the food and clothing distribution programmes at 16 spots today as the chief guest.

He added that the premier will begin distributing food and clothes among the poor and destitute at 11:30am in front of Rajdhani High School on Manik Mia Avenue.

Ministers, MPs, and leaders and activists of BNP and its associate bodies will remain present at the programmes, he added.

Sayrul added that BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan will distribute relief items among the poor in front of FDC at Karwan Bazar at 11:20am.

Rizvi will pay tribute at the graves of former president Ziaur Rahman and former PM Khaleda Zia at 10:30am, along with leaders of the Association of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Earlier at 10:00am, members of Ziaur Rahman Foundation will pay homage at the grave.

Rizvi will later distribute relief items among the destitute in the High Court Mazar gate area at 11:20am under a programme organised by lawyers.

Besides, BNP will arrange a discussion at the auditorium of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, at 2:00pm tomorrow to observe the death anniversary of its founder.