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How do our students abroad live

A Sharmin



BUET-IAB Lecture Series '89 concluded at BUET recently.

Subhir was cooking rice and potatoes in a pot. This was to be his evening meal. He was trying to eat rice with potato curry. After an exhausting day at his English Language Centre at Somerset he was craving for a Bengali dish. But alas! the small calm Somerset did not have Indian restaurants to give him what he wanted. Back home being the son of a morried businessman he had never dreamt of entering the kitchen. But here he was cooking his own meal and wondering what his mother would do if she saw him now. She would surely cry, that is what all Bengali mothers do.

He had come to UK in January about six months back for joining the Bar-at-Law course. But as he was weak in English he had no alternative but to attend a Language course. The dull

drab British weather had largely dampened his spirits and he very much longed to return to Bangladesh. He had not developed a liking for the fast British life where there were no servants and where time mattered. An honours graduate in Law from the University of Dhaka Subhir had never imagined that life would be so tough. He had thought with his father's money he could live comfortably but reality is far from it.

Shaheen, studying Economics in an university at Swansea, Wales had a different story to tell. She rarely missed home. The first three months of her stay in new surroundings was terrible but now she had overcome the teething period. The last two years had been years of pleasure. She loved the Welsh countryside, the beautiful surround-

ings and their songs and music. She had learnt the language too and thought of Swansea as her home. The hospitality of the English had touched her deeply and she has made innumerable friends in UK. Every vacation is spent visiting friends and seeing places. At times when she is short of cash she works parttime in the local stores as a sales girl during the weekends. For her the food is no problem. She is used to fish and chips or Yorkshire pudding and been steaks. When she is in a hurry she grabs a sandwich or some tinned food.

Mamun studying at Virginia Polytechnic in USA had become used to American way of life. For the last three years he was in Virginia. He came here because one of his maternal uncles lives here but now he is far detached

from the Bengali community. He feels it is safer to be away from one's own people because they are jealous and can harm one. In fact he does not trust the Asians much and prefers to mix with Americans who are easy going. During the summer vacations he goes to Florida and works as a parttimer in the restuarant there earning less than others but enough to support him. He has seen a bit of USA and hopes to go to Canada before returning "US", he says "is a wonderful place for genuine students who come here to study. The teachers are good, the fellow students are friendly but for people who come here illegally it is a hell. It is they who spoil chances for others too. There are many Bengalis rotting in the goal even then many take chances. This needs to be checked.

Zahir a high school grader at New Jersey was extremely critical of most Bengali students, who come to US in the hope of staying permanently. They are on the lookout for chances. Some marry local girls in the hope of getting a green card, others enter "contract marriages" while a third try to find channels to get a green card. They are far away from their studies or books. They do jobs instead of attending their institution classes. It is these students who bring bad name for us and for the entire nation. We, Bangladeshis are reputed for our brains but students like these spoil our reputation. They live in unimaginable circumstances huddled together like sardines in a room. They wear the same old stuff over and over again which is dirty and tattered. They eat the worst food available yet they live in USA in the hope of getting immigration in the long run.