

Dhaka Day by Day

Where Mac is the Driving Force

by Aasha M. Amin

When you go to Gulshan's No. 1 D.I.T. Market what do you notice apart from a galore of foreign goods and local goods at foreign prices? Do you ever notice the little girls or little boys running towards your car, their eyes shining with expectation. "I coming for kuli, yes?" they will say if you are not a Bangladeshi and if you are, a simple "kuli lagbo afa/saar?" will suffice.

Their persistence may irritate you and you may brush them aside or maybe you will give in, being unable to resist their infectious smiles.

shock. I realized, however, that most of the time these infants do not even know the implications of such obscenities.

When asked how much he earns every day, Jahangir, an 8-year-old says,

"Sometimes I get 40 to 50, sometimes 5 to 10, and sometimes — nothing."

"And what do you do with all this money?," I ask to which he replies,

"Well, usually I give the money to my mother because she needs it to pay the rent but I keep



Moynas and Jahangirs line up to be photographed.

—Star photo

Phulmati, Moyna, Jharna, Najma, Jahangir, Shapan — their names are colourful enough to match their personalities. At an age when pampered children from well-to-do families grumble about school and enforced break fasts, these youngsters carry heavy loads for their customers from the market to their cars. Their ages range from 7 to 14 although their stunted figures due to malnutrition make them look much younger. As Baby, a diminutive girl who looks about five, says, "I look small but I am actually quite old — about 7 to 8. But I don't tell anyone that," she adds with a conspiratorial smile.

Work starts for these children around nine or ten in the morning when people start to come to the market for their daily "bazaar". Often this goes on till eight in the evening when the market closes.

"Why do you stay so long?" I asked Moyna, a girl of about 10 or 11. "Sometimes," she answered, "it is really hard to get anyone to take me as kuli because there are so many of us." The boys often hit me if a customer chooses me instead of one of them." This, I am later informed, is not entirely true since Moyna, being the aggressive type, is a kind of Phulan Devi, even among the boys. "In any case," she adds, "my mother will beat me if I don't take money home. So I stay in the market until I have earned some money." This seems to be the case for many of the children, whose parents treat them like money-making machines to be used and exploited. Typically, they have only one parent usually the mother whose husband has deserted her and her children to marry someone younger. As Phulmati, an endearing little girl with curly brown hair says, "I don't like my father. He left us and married another woman. My mother went to him the other day to get some money for the rent but he beat her and drove her out. But wherever he comes to us he tries to get money out of me." Such things makes one's blood boil in outrage but to these children it is matter of fact.

"And how is your new mother (Naton maa)?"

"Oh she is very good looking but a total" She blurts out quite casually, as my jaw drops in

some for my food and sometimes I watch 'bof' (movie).

The last comment is made a little sheepishly since it is not 'good' to watch movies, a convenient moral standard the parents impose to extract more money.

Going to watch a 'bof' is the most favourite form of entertainment for these children. The silver screen with all its glitter and glamour represents a different world, an escape from the squalor of their homes and from the constant worry about money. The most popular film seems to be 'Beder Meyc Josna' and I try to hide my amusement as they give me a mini performance of a song and dance routine in the film.

Watching television, whenever the opportunity arises is probably the next best thing they like to do. When I ask Jahangir what he wants to be when he grows up he promptly answers — "Macdriver" (Macgyver). "He is the king of drivers and I'm going to wash my hair with shampoo to make it white like his and then I'm going to make my car fly over all the tall buildings."

This kind of optimism and imagination is apparent in all of them in spite of the hard circumstances in which they live. They are always full of hope, full of energy.

In addition, their relationship with customers give them a sense of belonging that their parents fail to give. Most of them have a 'Mem Sahib' or 'Sahib' or a 'Khalamma' who give them clothes, extra money and sweets. Some of the customers have even set up a school for them called 'Dip Shikha' which convenes every Friday morning in the first floor of the market. Taught by voluntary teachers, these children get free stationary and uniforms.

These street wise children are their own masters, and rely on their intelligence and intuition to survive in a harsh world where adults live off their children instead of the other way round. The long hours, uncertain income and cruel beatings from parents or market darwans (guards), leave their spirits undaunted in their pursuit for independence and freedom.

'Lawlessness won't be tolerated any more'

Finance and Planning Minister M. Saifur Rahman Friday said the government is determined to maintain law and order in the country for the sake of public security and uninterrupted production, reports BSS.

Addressing a conference of Gulshan Unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the Finance and Planning Minister categorically said, "The government cannot tolerate lawlessness any more in the country."

He said there is no scope for taking as weakness the sympathetic attitude of the democratic government, which came to power after a long struggle against autocracy.

Saifur Rahman said some quarter was trying to destabilise the democratic rule by giving lip service for democracy but in practice provoking violence and terrorism.

"Violence and terrorism cannot bring any welfare for the country," he said.

The conference was also addressed by State Minister for Jute Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Abdul Hannan Shah MP and M. Kamrul Islam. BNP nominated candidate in the coming Jatiya Sangsad bye-election for Gulshan-Cantonment constituency.

The Finance and Planning Minister said the BNP Government had been fulfilling electoral pledges of the party on priority basis.

Despite many odds, the government had waived rents of 25 bighas of land, written off agricultural loan up to Taka five thousand with interest and extended the age limit in gov-

ernment services from 27 to 30 years, he mentioned.

Regarding the "misleading propaganda" about the new pay scale for the government employees, the Finance and Planning Minister said the class three and four employees have got 80 per cent of the enhanced salary while the officers would get the rest 20 per cent.

He said the salary of the government employees had been increased within the maximum allowable limit of its monetary and budgetary positions.

He called upon the employees to accept the new pay scale considering the present economic condition of the country.

Bus services for women face problems

By Staff Correspondent

The bus services for female of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) in five routes may go off the road due to passengers shortage, said a press release of BRTC on Thursday.

It said that the five buses were introduced on July 27 but a few passengers were travelling on this service. Moreover those who were travelling were not paying the proper fare.

The BRTC authorities urged the women to avail the buses more paying proper fare for the sake of the continuation and expansion of the service.

Misappropriation of T&T funds refuted

Bangladesh Telejogajog Sramik Karmachari Parishad (BATESKOP) Friday demanded that the Telejogajog Sramik Karmachari Union (TSKU) apologise in public for its "baseless and motivated remarks" against the CBA, reports UNB.

TSKU at a press conference Wednesday alleged misappropriation of T&T funds by some officials and CBA leaders and demanded removal of the T&T Board Chairman. BATESKOP is the CBA of the Board.

Addressing a press conference on Friday morning, BATESKOP President Syed Kutubur Rahman, refuted the charges, branded its rival organisation as an ally of the previous regime and alleged it was trying to create confusion among the striking workers.

"TSKU is out to create chaos and confusion through misleading statements in a bid to rehabilitate itself under the umbrella of the ruling party's labour front", Rahman said.

Expressing solidarity with the movement of government employees, he announced separate programme of the BATESKOP, including three-hour work abstention for five days from today (Saturday).

Its programme also includes day-long work stoppage and rally on August 29, and three-hour work abstention for four days from August 31.

Fresh programme will be announced at a rally on September 3, Rahman said adding that instant action programmes would follow if their leaders are arrested or terminated during the programme.

What's on today . . .

Seminar on telecom role

A seminar on the "role of telecommunication in the context of developing countries" will be held at the auditorium of German Cultural Centre and Goethe-Institut (House No 23, Road No 2) at Dhanmondi in the city today (Saturday) at 5 pm.

Michaela Spaeth, Second Secretary of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Dhaka, will attend the seminar as the guest of honour.

Prof A M Patwari, Director General of the ICTVTR, will chair the programme while Muhammad Fariduddin, General Manager of Telephone Shilpa Sangstha Limited, will present the key-note paper on the topic.

Workshop on risk management

A four-day national workshop on "risk management in Bangladesh agriculture" begins in the city today (Saturday).

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the workshop at the international conference centre at 10.30 in the morning.

Organised by Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), the workshop will be attended by eighty senior level policy planners, scientists, extension specialists, executives representing fifty organisations from home and abroad.

A total of thirty technical papers including four key-note papers will be presented during the four day deliberations.

BCU hunger strike

CPB-backed Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) today (Saturday) organises a country-wide students-masses hunger strike in demand of immediate reopening of all closed educational institutions, to get rid of students from the curse of terrorism and arrest of the terrorists.

A seven-hour hunger strike of the students and masses will be observed in front of the National Press Club in the city.

The BCU in a press statement urged upon the people of all sections to participate in the programme.

Mofassiluddin Trust Fund lecture

The Prof Mofassiluddin Ahmed Trust Fund Lecture 1991 will be held at the auditorium of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh today (Saturday) at 5 pm.

Dr M Khurshid Ali, former Director, Students Counselling Centre, Dhaka University, will deliver the lecture on "Characteristics of psychotherapeutic interview".

Dr A M Sharafuddin, President of the Society, will preside.

. . . and tomorrow

Photo exhibition on festivals

The 14th mobile photographic exhibition on the traditional festivals of the Asia and Pacific countries will begin at the Shilpakala Academy gallery in the city tomorrow (Sunday). Jointly sponsored by the Shilpakala Academy and Bangladesh UNESCO National Commission, the exhibition will remain open till September 3, everyday from 2 pm to 7 pm.

Education and Cultural Affairs Minister Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury will open the 10-day exhibition as the chief guest tomorrow at 5 pm. He will distribute the prizes among the juvenile artists who were recently awarded with Japanese prizes in an art exhibition held at the Mitshubishi impress gallery in Japan.

Cultural Secretary and Bangladesh UNESCO National Commission Secretary General A N M Yusuf will preside over the session.

'VAT to hardly yield any positive result'

Academicians participating at a seminar in the city Friday were of the view that VAT (Value Added Tax) would hardly yield any positive result unless both "tax evasion culture" and corruption in collection mechanism go, reports UNB.

They appreciated VAT as a modern taxation system and wanted the government to continue it but simultaneously expressed skepticism about its effectiveness in fetching additional revenue in the present socio-cultural context of the country.

Prof. Abdul Mannan Chowdhury of Management Department of Dhaka University presented the key-note paper at the seminar on VAT organised by National Management Association at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium Friday afternoon.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Nurul Hossain Khan was present as the chief guest.

Dhaka University teachers from the Commerce Faculty, including Dr. M. A. Mannan, Dr. Khandaker Badrul Alam, Dr. Mofizur Rahman, Prof. A. B. M. Alam and Prof. Shanti Narayan Ghosh, took part in the discussion.

In his key-note paper, Prof. Abdul Mannan Chowdhury

wondered if a progressive tax system like VAT should be applied in a country like Bangladesh where "we lack minimum honesty both in paying and collecting taxes".

Participating in the discussion, Prof. Shanti Narayan Ghosh expressed his doubts about the effectiveness of VAT in immediately raising revenue collection of the country.

He said additional revenue will mostly depend on how sincere are the tax payers and how honest is the collection machinery.

Prof. Ghosh cautioned that unrecorded sale would increase to evade VAT.

Agreeing to the academicians' apprehensions, NBR Chairman Nurul Hossain Khan said that honesty and sincerity are the vital factors in making the taxation system effective.

But how can you expect honesty in the tax collection alone when the entire society is steeped in corruption, Khan asked.

Tax paying culture is almost totally absent here ... tax evasion is seen by most as an intelligent practice", the NBR chief said.

Prof. A. B. M. Khaled, Dean of the Commerce Faculty of Dhaka University, presided over the seminar.

Bangla Academy EC polls after 8 years

By Star Correspondent

After about 8 years, seven members of Executive Council of Bangla Academy are going to be elected through postal ballot system. Voters are to send their ballots through registered post by September 3 at the latest.

It may be recalled that in 1983, a Martial Law order stripped the Executive Council of its rights and vested all powers, both executive and financial, in the hands of the then Director General of the Academy. The Academy was also crippled for curbing its autonomy and for reducing the number of its divisions from seven to four. In protest against these measures, elected members of the council Dr Ahmed Sharif, Dr Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Muhammad Abu Zafar, Dr Wakil Ahmed, Faiz Ahmed and Jaharana Imam resigned. Since then, no election was held.

In the present election, a panel headed by Dr Anisuzzaman is contesting. The other candidates of the panel are: Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Dr Humayun Ahmed, Professor Mamtazuddin Ahmed.

There is another panel of seven which is being led by Dr Ashraf Siddiqui. The panel includes Abdul Jabbar Mehman, Abdul Majid, Dr Abdul Awal, Fahmida Amin, Sadqa Shafulah and Beduin Samad. Besides, a number of independent candidates including Khandker Ashraf Hossain, Advocate Fazlul Huq are also contesting. In total, 29 candidates are contesting.

The council consists of 18 members. Besides elected members, the rest are nominated and ex-officio. At present there are 130 fellows, 823 life members and 143 general members. All of them are voters.

Obituary

Syed Anisul Huq, retired Post Master General, died in Dhaka Friday of a massive heart attack. He was 82, reports BSS.

The deceased, who hailed from Bogra, left behind his wife and two daughters.

The namaz-e-janaza of late Huq will be held at Tikatoli Jame Mosque today (Saturday) after Jehr prayer.

1 killed in road accident
By Staff Correspondent
A young boy was killed by a speeding truck Friday afternoon at the Biswa Road in Kanchpur.

Police said Jalal (8), a pedestrian, was struck by the truck (Khulna-ta-80) on the highway near Kanchpur Road. The killer struck fled away. Jalal died on the spot.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR TOEFL EXAMINEES

Examinees who register for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in Bangladesh will be required to present a valid passport as identification, beginning with the November 16, 1991 test administration. No other form of identification will be accepted at test centers in this country.

Please note that no candidates will be allowed to take TOEFL without a valid passport beginning with November 16 TOEFL.

TOEFL Office
Princeton, NJ, USA

তেলাপোকা ও মাছি ধ্বংসে নতুন সমাধান

নকরোট এখন বাংলাদেশে



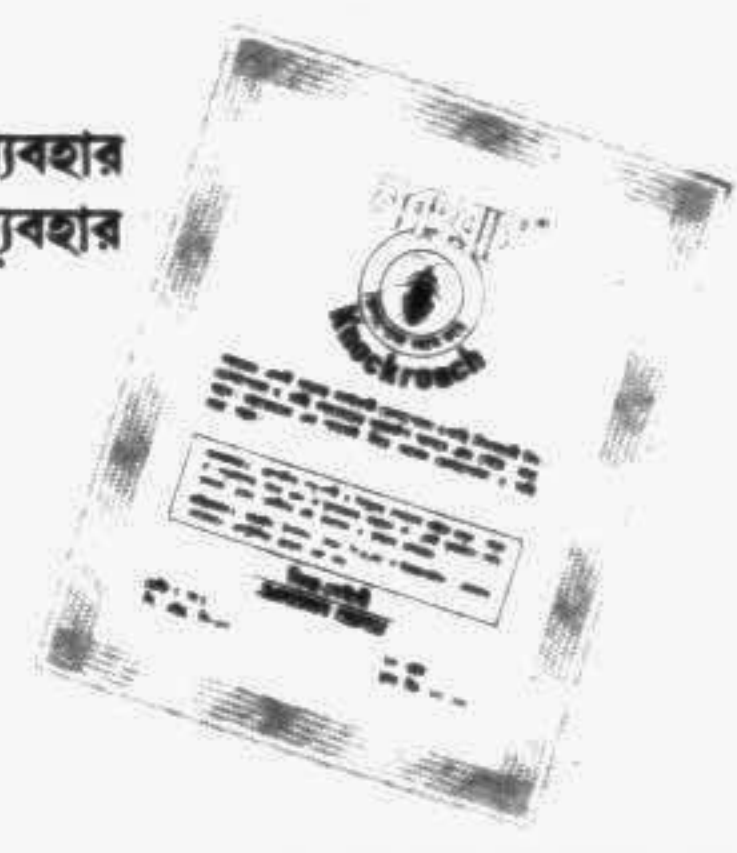
নকরোট - একটি সরাসরি ব্যবহার উপযোগী দানাদার বিস-টোপ যার আকর্ষণে তেলাপোকা ও মাছি আপনা আপনি আসে এবং খেয়ে মারা যায়।

নকরোট - এর সংশোধন কোন কিছু মেলাতে হয় না বা ক্ষেত্রান্তের দরকার হয় না শুধু প্যাকেটের কোথা কেটে কয়েক জায়গায় ছিটকে রাখতে হয়।

নকরোট - মানুষ বা গৃহপালিত পশুর জন্য হাতে হাতে বলে ভুলক্রমে বাতায়র সন্ধান করা কম।

নকরোট - খেয়ে জাতীয় নয় বলে বাতাসে মেখে না, তাই বাস-প্রাঙ্গণের সংশোধন দেহের ভিতরে বাতায়র সন্ধান করা অনেক কম।

প্যাকেটের গায়ে লেখা ব্যবহার বিধি পড়ুন এবং আজই ব্যবহার করুন।



সিবা-গেইগী

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Weather

Depression weakens

By Staff Correspondent

Monsoon depression over north west Bay off Orissa-West Bengal coast moved north westwards and weakened after crossing Orissa-West Bengal coast near Ballassore around Thursday night, according to Met Office.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to lower warning signals.

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind with a few moderately heavy fall is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Khulna division during the next 24 hours ending 6 pm Saturday. Day temperature is likely to rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

Cox's Bazar recorded the highest 38 mm rainfall during the last 12 hours till 6 pm Friday. Feni had 24 mm, Ishardi 23 mm, Teknaf 21 mm, Rangamati and Satkhira 19 mm each and Chittagong 18 mm shower during the period.

Rangpur recorded the highest temperature 34 degrees Celsius while Barisal the lowest 23.6 degrees.

The sun sets on Saturday at 6-25 pm and rises on Sunday at 5-37 am.

The temperature and humidity of some towns and cities on Friday were:

Town/City	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.4	26.5	86	86
Chittagong	31.6	25.4	80	97
Khulna	32.7	27.2	83	92
Rajshahi	33.0	25.3	92	95
Jessore	32.0	26.0	x	x
Sylhet	33.2	25.4	73	75
Rangpur	34.0	25.4	97	79