

Dhaka Day by Day

Two Meals, Ten Taka and a Ticket to the Future

by Andrea L Beckwith

Almost everyone is familiar with Notre Dame College here in Dhaka. Probably less familiar to most is the little trade school that lies on the very same campus.

The Notre Dame College Trade School offers a six-month training course for boys of ages 10 to 14. Training is offered in four areas: mechanics, tailoring, carpentry and electricity. (The tailoring facilities, incidentally, are also made available to girls who participate in a commercial scheme run by the NGO Caritas.) The boys (48 in total) are divided up into groups of twelve and assigned to one of the sections. They will remain in their respective sections for the remainder of the course.

The boys come from extremely poor families and, on occasion, are actually street children. In addition to the training they receive, the boys are each given two meals and ten taka for their day's work.

The Trade School has been in operation for seven years now. It was founded by Father James T Banas who has lived and worked in Bangladesh for over thirty years. Notre Dame College's Brother Nicholas, CSC, himself a Bangladeshi resident for twenty-five years, is currently the Director of the Trade School and oversees the operation on a daily basis. The school's managing committee is chaired by Notre Dame College Principal Father J S Pezzotto, CSC.

Funding and support were provided for the first three years by Caritas. Since then, the trade school has relied on the support of local well-wishers and the occasional foreigner to pay for the salaries of the staff and the students and to cover all other costs.

Ideally, the trade school is to be a self-supporting enterprise. Brother Nicholas had hoped that the proceeds from the goods made by the children would cover the costs of running the school. However, because demand for their goods is limited, actual output is not great enough to generate the funds needed.

Regarding the financial situation, Brother Nicholas would like to see a scheme introduced similar to that at the St Joseph School, Mohammedpur. There, the parents of the school's regular students pay a lump sum of 65 taka per year to support a programme for un-

derprivileged children.

Despite the ongoing concern about funding, the atmosphere in the Trade School remains positive and optimistic; the very spirit in which the school was conceived.

Thuopin Hasdak, carpentry trainer at the school for two years, encourages his students in their efforts. Those who excel in their performance might, on occasion, be kept on beyond the six months as an apprentice. Twelve-year-old Sobhan, for instance, the son of a rickshaw puller, is now an apprentice in the carpentry division and continues to work at the school, receiving two meals and twelve taka per day.

The students regularly produce or repair things for Notre Dame College or other on-campus facilities. Carpentry students are presently busy at work constructing a veranda for the neighbouring shelter which Father Banas

set up to house sick people and outpatients on a temporary basis. The students of the Trade School are also continually exposed to the College environment.

Driving along the streets of Dhaka, one is constantly reminded of the bleak existence which all too many Bangladeshi children face. The destitute children one sees while stopped at a red light or stuck in a traffic jam inevitably provokes sympathy for the plight of these unfortunate youngsters and that of the countless others like them. One drives off hoping a little luck and happiness will come their way.

But these children need more than the hopes and prayers of passers-by. To see the commitment of the Notre Dame College Trade School staff to work for and with them is truly heartening. Father Banas, Brother Nicholas, and the trainers like Thuopin Hasdak have won the trust and confidence of these young boys, and through them the Trade School offers individual attention to otherwise deprived children.

The boys are invariably provided with more than food and ten taka. At the end of the day, they are provided with a sense of self-worth and a marketable skill — their key to a brighter future.



A brighter future for the otherwise deprived children. Photo: A. Beckwith

BRTC asked to provide private service on commercial basis

Communication Minister Colonel (ret'd) Oli Ahmed on Saturday said Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) should be turned into a self-financing and profit earning organisation with the combined efforts of its workers and employees, reports BSS.

He said the nation could no more bear the losses of BRTC. He said the idle capacities in BRTC workshops should be utilised by providing services to others on commercial basis.

During his visit to the BRTC workshops at Tejgaon and Joydebpur Saturday the minister told the managements of BRTC and the workshops that they must repay their out-

standing loans to the government from next December by increasing their income.

BRTC has a fleet of 432 vehicles consisting of 212 buses and 216 trucks now in operation 220 buses and 29 trucks are under repair in its different workshop while 56 buses and 51 trucks, declared condemned, are under process to dispose off.

The Communication Minister was informed that 132 buses were repaired by the workshops during the last six months. It is expected that by the end of this year all the vehicles now under repair will be operational.

The Communication

Minister asked the corporation to make optimum utilisation of its vehicles and the workshop facilities and take care of them properly.

He requested all the government, semi-government and autonomous organisations to utilise the facilities of BRTC workshops for body building of trucks and buses, repairing and testing of their vehicles and manufacture of spareparts.

He directed the BRTC authority to provide services to the private parties also on commercial basis.

The integrated central workshop of BRTC, situated at Joydebpur, was established in 1981 at a cost of Taka 24 crore with the financial assistance of Japan.

Both the workshop at Joydebpur and Tejgaon can make major overhauling of engines, retard expired tyres, test fast moving parts and manufacture some spare parts.

But it was found that the machine shop of the huge workshop at Joydebpur remained idle for want of work. It can retread 250 tyres per month upto 85 per cent of original life time. But during last six months it retreaded only 122 tyres. This was due to lack of demand, official sources said.

TV Sunday

- 5.00 Opening announcement, Al Quran. Programme summary.
5.15 Recitation from the Bible
5.20 News in Bangla
5.30 Jhilmilim (children's programme)
5.55 Cartoon film: Aboot and Costello
6.20 Sports programme
7.05 Tagore songs
8.00 News in Bangla
8.30 Probaho
9.00 Drama series: Oshin
10.00 New in English
10.25 Parliament roundup
10.40 Chitra chanda
11.30 Khabar/The News
11.45 Closing

What's on today . . .

SAARC committee meeting

The ninth meeting of the SAARC Technical Committee on Health Population Activities begins today (Sunday) at 10 am at the Sonargaon Hotel in the city.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yousuf will inaugurate the meeting.

Secretary of the Ministry M Mokammel Haque will preside the three-day meeting will be participated by the representatives of SAARC member countries, experts in the field of health and population activities.

A total of 26 representatives including those of the host country Bangladesh will participate in deliberations of the meeting on various aspects of health and population activities.

Botanical pest control workshop

Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) is going to inaugurate a four-day workshop on botanical pest control today (Sunday). At BRRI premises in Gazipur.

Twenty scientists from India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) are going to participate in the workshop.

The workshop will review recent scientific advances in botanical pest control by collaborating countries and assess the status and needs in specific technical areas of botanical pest control and to formulate next work plan. The workshop is being sponsored by the ADB, IRRI and BRRI.

Radio, TV Artistes Council

Bangladesh Radio-Television Artists Council today (Sunday) holds a cultural function at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy auditorium at 7 in the evening to raise funds for the victims of April 29 cyclone.

Noted Odissi dancer Singaramuni Suny Mohapatra and singer Devashish Sarkar from India and prominent artistes of Bangladesh will participate in the cultural function.

Shuvechha Film Society

In observance of the 15th founding anniversary of Shuvechha Film Society, a four-day Soviet and Bangladesh film session and a discussion on 'Bangladesh-Soviet cultural relations' will be held today (Sunday) at 5.30 pm at the Soviet Cultural Centre in the city.

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas will be present at the function as the chief guest while Igor A Saprykin, Minister councillor, USSR Embassy in Dhaka and Hamed Shaful Islam, Secretary of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries will be the special guests.

Reception to ex-bank leader

Rupali Bank Officers Association will accord a reception to Ziaul Haq Zia, MP, former General Secretary of the Association, at a function to be held at Rupali Bank Head Office at 4.34 pm, today (Sunday). LGRD Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Tahukder will attend the function as the chief guest.

Rotary Club installation

The ninth installation ceremony of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Metropolitan will be held at 7 pm today (Sunday) at Hotel Sheraton.

Prof A Matin Patwari, Director General of the ICTVTR and former Vice-Chancellor of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) will attend the ceremony as the chief guest.

JPPP meets

Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party meets at the party's Parliamentary Office in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban today (Sunday) at 9 am.

JPPP Whip Muntrul Haq Chowdhury has requested all JP MPs to attend the meeting.

Jamaat majlis-e-sura meet

A meeting of the central Majlis-e-Sura of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh will be held today (Sunday) at 10 am at the party office.

Members of the Sura, district ameyas and MPs of the party have been asked to attend the meeting in time.

Chouddagram UZ Samity

An emergency meeting of the executive committee of Chouddagram Upazila Janakalyan Samity, Dhaka will be held today (Sunday) at 5.00 pm at 14/1 Madan Paul Lane, Nawabpur in the city.

. . . and tomorrow

Stamps exhibition

A three-day stamps exhibition Philex-91 begins at the Dhaka General Post Office (GPO) auditorium tomorrow (Monday) marking the 20th anniversary of the postage stamps of Bangladesh.

State Minister for Post and Telecommunication M Shamsul Islam will formally inaugurate the exhibition at 10 am. Bangladesh post office would release a special exhibition cover and three special cancellers in commemoration of the exhibition.

A large number of stamp collectors have submit their names for participation in the exhibition. Bangladesh National Philatelic Association has arranged the exhibition.

Discussion on Vidyasagar

Bangladesh Bhasa Samity (Language Association) will hold a discussion on Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar tomorrow (Monday) at 4.30 pm in observance of the centenary anniversary of the death of the great scholar at the Modern Language Institute of the Dhaka University.

Dr Ahmed Sharif will be in the chair while Dr Anisuzzaman, Bashir Al Helal and Abul Kassem Fazul Haq will participate in the discussion.

Kuwait, Iraq repatriates meet

A conference of the Kuwait and Iraq repatriated Bangladeshis will be held tomorrow (Monday) at 3 pm at the National Press Club auditorium.

State Minister for Labour and Manpower Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah will attend the conference as chief guest while State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Abdul Ali Miridha MP, journalist Otas Karnal Chowdhury will be special guests on the occasion. Kuwait and Iraq repatriated Bangladeshis Welfare Forum has arranged the conference.

EEC food aid

Bangladesh will receive 45,000 tons of wheat and 1500 tons of edible oil in emergency food aid worth about 3.5 crore from the European Economic Community (EEC), reports UNB.

An agreement to this effect has recently been signed between the government and the EEC in Brussels through a correspondence, an official hand-out said Saturday.

The food items will be distributed among the cyclone-affected families free of cost.

Housewife commits suicide

A housewife allegedly committed suicide at Kamrangirchar on late Friday night.

Police said Firoza(40), wife of Shoaib Ali of Nayagan in Kamrangirchar, committed suicide by hanging herself with a scarf from the ceiling-fan rod.

A case has been registered with Lalbagh police and the body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for post-mortem examination.



A procession was brought out in the city Saturday demanding trial of the husband of one Shila, a housewife who was allegedly killed for dowry recently.

Call to identify persons involved in campus unrest

Education Minister Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury Saturday called for identifying the people responsible for misusing politics to create unrest and violence in the country's educational institutions, reports BSS.

He said the country got rid of alien rule and autocracy through politics and it was a pity that terrorism, violence and malpractices were now continuing on the campus in the name of politics.

Inaugurating a six-day national workshop on academic staff development in higher education, in Dhaka Saturday Prof Chowdhury said students politicians and teachers have to think together to find a solution to the problem.

Jointly sponsored by the University Grants Commission and Bangladesh UNESCO National Commission, the inaugural session of the workshop was presided over by Prof M Shamsul Huq, Chairman, UGC and addressed by ANM Eusuf, Education

Secretary and Secretary General Bangladesh UNESCO National Commission, Prof Mohammed Ali, member, UGC and President workshop organising committee, Dr Mohammed Nurul Huq, Advisor, (Planning and development) UGC and member-secretary workshop organising committee gave the vote of thanks.

The Education Minister urged the people to come forward to help the students shape their future befitting the citizens of an independent, sovereign and self-respecting nation so that we were not identified as elements of shame and hatred in history.

He said the need of the hour was to analyse the inherent cause of the crisis for overcoming the dangerous situation prevailing in the educational arena. He said all-out and concerted cooperation of the whole nation was indispensable. He said maintenance of congenial atmosphere at all levels of education was also necessary in this regard.

Prof Chowdhury pointed out that the present government called a conference of all the political organisations for the first time with a view to ensuring a healthy atmosphere in the education arena. He said a consensus was reached in the conference for adopting a five-point effective programme on campus violence, question paper leak-out, unfair means in examinations and session jam and unemployment.

He said the responsibility of the teachers, educationists, social leaders, guardians and the students community including the politicians was immense.

Prof B Chowdhury said the traditional examination system had created a fear in the minds of the people. He stressed the need for a scientific and practical examination system in place of the age-old, unscientific and wasteful examination system.

He said the government was fully aware of the need for reorganising the problem-ridden education system on a priority basis as soon as possible. He said with this end in view, the highest allocation had been earmarked in the budget despite efforts being made to face successfully the unprecedented natural calamity.

He said the overall development of the country was never possible keeping the vast multitude of the population deprived of the light of education. He said the government was determined to start an extensive mass-literacy programme aimed at introducing employment-oriented adult and compulsory primary education.

Show cause notice served

'Pharmaceutical complex creating health hazard'

BEXIMCO Pharmaceutical complex at Tongi has been served with a show cause notice by the government for pollution of environment by discharging untreated chemical effluents, official sources said Saturday, reports BSS.

The Department of Environment served the notice on July 24 after spot verification by the concerned officials on the basis of public complaints.

It was reported that BEXIMCO uses toxic chemicals

in manufacturing different drugs and discharge the untreated effluents in the environment, creating health hazards and damaging crops.

The people around the complex made complaints a number of times about environmental pollution by the toxic discharge of the complex. In the recent months the company had to settle an issue of crop damage by paying necessary compensation to the affected people, the sources said.

Recently the 3rd unit of the complex went into operation further increasing the threat of environmental damage. The affected people lodged complaints to the department of environment on the basis of which it made spot verification and serve the notice.

Under existing law punishment for such offence is one year imprisonment or a fine of Taka 5000 or both. The law is being reviewed by the government to toughen the punishment, the official sources said.

BCL (N-S) memo to Home Ministry

Chhatra League (N-S) in a memorandum Sunday reiterated its demand to the government for immediate arrest of the killers of Dr Milon and Mahub, reports UNB.

The pro-JSD (Inu) Chhatra League submitted the memorandum to the Home Ministry after staging demonstration near the Secretariat gate in support of its demands.

It alleged the killers were roaming on the Dhaka University campus and also in the city at large.

Children team leaves for Japan tomorrow

A 12-member children delegation leaves Dhaka tomorrow for Japan to attend the Asia and Pacific Children Festival '91 a Shishu Academy press release said here Saturday, reports BSS.

The six-day festival will begin in Fukuoka, Japan on August 1, the press release added.

T & T employees demand new pay scale

By Staff Correspondent BNP backed Bangladesh Telejoagajog T & T Sramik Karmachari Union Saturday demanded immediate announcement of Pay Commission Report and its implementation.

The demand was made at a rally held in front of the Jatiya Press Club. The union also demanded enhanced allowance for workers and employees of the department as what they said the job nature inside the T&T Board was different from other organisations.

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