

Dhaka Day by Day

Nectar for Young Minds

by Fayza Haq

One of the happiest moments of one's childhood were those concerning the swapping of story books, magazines and comics. One's friends were those that lent one the books. Through the lazy monsoon rains one had fried peas and potato chips and read illustrated classics and comics. Thirty years ago the book shops in Dhaka had "Children's Digest", "Teen Digest" and other absorbing classics and mystery books for children.

Today a very ordinary fairytales book in English costs nothing less than Tk 250, while a thin collection of colouring books for children from China is for Tk 130. There are poorly printed abridged classics for children from India and they do not last long. The same could be said of the reasonably priced Indian fairytales books. There used to be a few Russian books for children in the market some time back, but now there is a definite dearth of even these.

The children's section in the British Council is rich, but this library of late, with the upheavals in the city, is not easily accessible.

There are books for young ones at the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institut too, but one has to be a member, and must know the languages well to benefit from these books.

The introduction of the VCRs and television in the last two decades, moreover, has destroyed the desire in our youth to read. Young ones in Dhaka today generally read less than what they did before. They tend to avoid classics and limit themselves to detective and mystery novels. Science fiction captures the mind of the science oriented teen-ager. But often little reading is done beyond this limit and that of rare imported pop magazines.

To discuss children's reading material, Claude Delafosse and Sabine Krawczyk were at the Bangla Academy, holding a workshop there, and at other places in Dhaka and Chittagong. They had with them samples of 15 different children's magazines from Paris. They talked about how essential reading materials were for children and how they could be presented in the most tempting manner.

Delafosse is the chief editor of "Astrapi" that appears twice a month, and has a circulation of a hundred thousand. He said that creating magazines for children involved more work than that for normal magazines. "Everybody can't write for children. They are good writers and journalists but they are not necessarily equipped with the talent to write in a way that they can lure children. To communicate with them you must be careful of their mind and taste," he pointed out.

Where do the staff of "Astrapi" get their inspiration from? "We get our ideas from everything. In life anything is interesting; you just

have to find the angle. We have basic subjects and deal with everything in history, geography and science. In 12 years we sometimes did the same subject four times over but all from very different angles," the writer cum illustrator replied.

Talking about how important reading materials were for children, Delafosse commented that it was very important "for children to have access to reading during their formative years. This also helps exchange ideas between parents and children as the youth often refer to their elders to explain what they cannot understand. Some of the magazines for the young even cater for two-year-old children. We hope that the magazines bring the parents and young ones together."

Discussing how different it was to bring out reading material on children the young editor said, "For the children's magazine the pictorial part is very important. You have to mix the illustrations and the text to attract the child to the subject. Young children are hesitant and lazy to read long texts. They have

to be interested and attracted by the pictures. Both the text and the illustration have equal importance. We try to blend the text with the illustrations. The illustrator's work has to be much more imaginative like that of a photographer. He has to be comic, dream-like, and poetic. The illustrator must have a high degree of creativity."

What made him go in for children's magazine rather than writing and illustrating for adults? "I love humour and nonsense. I am childlike in many ways myself. It is rewarding to make children laugh and to instruct them in a way that excites, intrigues and interests them. I like the casual atmosphere that we work in while creating magazines for children. For adults one would have to be so much more serious and sedate," he replied.

Discussing the problems of bringing out a magazine on schedule, the magazine expert said that although his product was always in time for the readers, trying to meet a schedule is difficult universally. "This is because creative people do not have a clock in their head. I prefer to have good work handed in late rather than getting a poor one in time," he added. "Very often the commercial section tries to make us compromise and bring down the quality by printing something that is not quite up to the mark, but we try not to succumb to such temptations. Children are the adults of tomorrow. In dealing with their minds we are handling very precious and sensitive matter," Delafosse remarked.

"Astrapi" costs 25 francs and has a circulation of a hundred thousand. It employs 13 regular workers and various part-timers. Its news sheet, included in the magazine, is very innovative.



An illustration from 'Astrapi'.

HERE and THERE

Muslim Brotherhood Assoc

A general meeting of the World Muslim Brotherhood Association was held in Dhaka on October 22 under the Chairmanship of Manik Shikder. The meeting was also attended by Farid Uddin Al-Azad, Nazrul Islam, Mustuzur Rahman.

ATM Momtazul Karim, Secretary General of the Association was present as the chief guest. The Dhaka division committee of the Association was also formed at the meeting with Manik Shikder as President, says a press release.

CHT Chhatra Parishad

Parbattya Chattagram Banglaee Chhatra Gono Parishad in a statement on Wednesday welcomed the recent amnesty announced by the government for the Shanti Bahini rebels. The statement also hoped that the refugees numbering about 25,000 or so currently staying in different camps in India will utilise this chance to back home.

Zonta Club

Zonta International Club III, Dhaka has taken up projects of 'adult literacy programme' for underprivileged women and mother and child health care programme. Under the project, two schools and a free clinic are being set up and will start functioning from the first week of November. The club was formed on August 25 this year with Tamara R. Ali as its President.

Jatiya Sramik Party

A meeting of the Jatiya Sramik Party Central Conference Organising Committee was held at the party central office in Dhaka Wednesday.

Presided over by the Convener of the Organising Committee Azizul Haq, the meeting was also attended by Party President Shah Md. Abu Zafar, Secretary General MA Gaffor, Omar Faruk Kharsu, Bazul Karim and others.

The meeting decided to hold the conference on January 5 and 6 next year, says a press release.

Rangpur Kalyan Samity

A meeting of the ad-hoc executive committee of Brihator Rangpur Kalyan Samity was held on Monday in the city.

The committee decided to launch relief programmes in the flood-hit northern region of the country.

A seven-member relief committee has been formed with Rafiqul Islam Mondal as the convener of the committee.

The people of the greater Rangpur residing in Dhaka have been requested to contact the Relief Committee or the General Secretary of the Committee over telephone (Nos 608987, 326223 or 312047) respectively.

BASSKF

The postponed meeting of representatives of Bangladesh Sarkari, Besarkari, Shoyotta-Shashita Sramik Karmachari Federation, government, non-government and autonomous organisations' employees and workers federation was held in Dhaka on Tuesday. Presided over by Sadakatul Bari the meeting was attended by representatives of 40 different unions. A 30-member committee was approved at the meeting with Sadakatul Bari as President, Shamsul Huda Mamun as Secretary General, Md. Giasuddin Ahmed as Senior Vice-President, Md. Moazzam Hossain as Deputy Secretary General and Abdul Huq as office secretary, says a press release.



Compiled by ASZ
Thursday

- 5.00 Opening Announcement, Al Quran, Programme summary
- 5.15 Recitation from the Ceeta
- 5.20 News in Bangla
- 5.30 Balite Para
- 6.00 Cartoon Film: Captain Planet and the Planetoids
- 6.30 Jiboner Alo
- 7.05 Katha O Sur
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 Drama of the week
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Film Show: Tender is the Night
- 11.30 Khabor/The News

WB asks govt to realise Tk 600 crore power bills

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman Wednesday urged the donors to consider the practical aspects while suggesting radical reforms, reports UNB.

The reiteration of the Finance Minister came when the visiting World Bank Director Jochen Karaske called on him at his residence in the evening.

Rahman suggested the World Bank to work together with relevant government officials to prepare a dependable list of aid worthy projects and programmes.

Their discussion concentrated on progress and problems of World Bank assisted on-going and proposed projects in Bangladesh.

Stressing the need for making external loans more effective, the World Bank Director suggested the government to strengthen the efforts in recovering outstanding power bills to minimise the financial constraints of PDB.

The PDB outstanding bills amount to about Tk 600 crore, more than 50 per cent of which lies with the government organisations.

ERD Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, World Bank Alternate Executive Director M.A. Saeed and the Bank's Resident

Representative Christopher R Wloughly were present during the discussion.

Industrial policy hailed

The visiting World Bank Director Wednesday reiterated the Bank's continued support to rapid industrial development and reform programmes of Bangladesh.

Karaske Director of the Bank made the pledge when he met Industries Minister, Shamsul Islam Khan at the BCIC conference room.

The Industries Secretary and leading industrialists of the country were present at the meeting.

The Industries Minister explained to the World Bank Director the new industrial policy '91 of the government and other programmes which are being implemented. He said the present democratic government was committed to developing the industries sector to increase its contribution on the gross domestic product, national income resources and employment in this regard. He said the government had introduced liberalised industrial policy giving more emphasis on development in the private sector and to encourage domestic and foreign investment in overall industrial

development.

The World Bank Director hailed the new industrial policy of the Bangladesh government and expressed the hope that this liberal policy would help open up economy and development of private sector.

Karaske emphasised the need for achieving efficiency of the private entrepreneurs so that they could achieve the sensible measures of competition within the country and abroad.

He also expressed the hope that Bangladesh would be able to introduce an objective measure in business of export and import for the healthy growth of the country's economy.

Biswas greets Kaunda

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has in a message congratulated Dr Kenneth D. Kaunda on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Zambia, reports BSS.

In a felicitation message, President Biswas conveyed Kaunda sincere greetings and wished him good health, happiness and long life and also continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Zambia.

Protection of weavers interests urged

Sarbadalya Tanti Otkya Parishad Wednesday called upon the government to formulate a policy that will safeguard the interests of the weavers, reports BSS.

In a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka the Tanti Otkya Parishad, an umbrella organisation of different weavers' groups also demanded setting up handloom ministry and Handloom Bank

and on dissolution of Handloom Board, Textile Department and BTMC.

It urged the government to waive handloom loan after probing the 'handloom loan scandal'.

The leaders of the Otkya Parishad said the weavers affected due to the flood tidal surge cyclone and tornado in 1987-88-91, must be rehabilitated.

The press conference was attended among others by Otkya Parishad leaders Sohrawuddin Ahmed Samsul Alam, Zulfiqar, M Iqbal Khaled Tito and Kamrul Islam Babu.

Dhaka elected UNEP governing body member

Bangladesh was unanimously elected a member of the governing council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at the plenary session of the General Assembly Tuesday, according to a message received in Dhaka Wednesday, reports BSS.

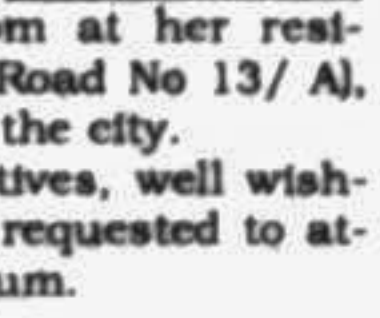
A major body of the UN system, UNEP has acquired added importance in view of the heightened concern of the international community for environmental issues.

Earlier Bangladesh's candidature was unanimously endorsed by the Asian Regional group.

This is the second major electoral victory for Bangladesh in the UN since restoration of the democracy in the country reflecting confidence and respect of the world community in the democratic government of Bangladesh and the active role being played by it in the United Nations system. Earlier, in the year Bangladesh was elected to the Human Rights Commission.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Lulu Ferdous Ara, wife of Abul Qasem, Additional Chief Engineer of PWD, will be held tomorrow (Friday) at 4 pm at her residence (No 24, Road No 13/ A, Dhanmondi) in the city.



All her relatives, well-wishers have been requested to attend the chehlum.

Chehlum of Al-Haj T. Hossain, retired Chief Engineer of PWD will be held tomorrow (Friday) after Ashar Prayer at his Hossaini Dalan Road residence.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the function.

JU first year honours classes begin Nov 1

The first year honours classes of 1990-91 session of Jahangirnagar University begin November 2, reports UNB.

The students have been asked to contact respective hall authorities regarding their accommodation by November 1, said a JU press release Wednesday.

It also advised the students attached to the newly-built Maolana Bhasani Hall to contact the hall authorities on October 31 and November 1 from 8 am to 5 pm.

Ornaments snatched

By Staff Correspondent
Armed muggers snatched away gold ornaments from a lady returning from the market by a rickshaw near Banani Bazar on Wednesday morning.

Two youngmen on a motorcycle stopped the rickshaw near Banani Road No. 13 at around 10 am brandishing a dagger and a pistol. They snatched two gold bangles weighing about two tolas from the hands of Khaleda Khair and left the place riding a motorcycle.

Weather

Dry weather to prevail

By Staff Correspondent

Met office forecast Wednesday that dry weather would prevail over the country during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Wednesday.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged during the period, it also said.

Temperature and humidity recorded on Wednesday at important cities and towns were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	31.6	22.6	77	70
Chittagong	31.5	21.6	85	77
Rajshahi	30.6	19.0	88	82
Khulna	31.3	21.0	83	71
Barisal	31.5	21.6	84	88
Feni	34.0	21.1	77	77
Sylhet	32.6			78
Dinajpur	30.8	19.0	73	83
Mymensingh	32.0	18.7	80	75

Sun sets in Dhaka on Thursday at 5:26 pm and rises Friday at 6:01 am.

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

VACANCY

An international development agency invites applications for the position of Assistant Administration and General Services. The candidate must have at least a Bachelor's degree, must be fluent in written and spoken English, should possess word processing skills (Word Perfect and Lotus 1-2-3), and must possess at least 4 years prior professional working experience.

Please submit resume addressed to Administrative Officer, GPO Box 666, Dhaka along with a recent passport size photo so as to reach him by November 10, 1991.

D-118



SEA-LAND SERVICE, INC (USA) NOTICE TO CONSIGNEES/SHIPPERS

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New voluntary organisation floated

A new non-political voluntary organisation named "Prattit Samajkalyan Sangstha" was floated in Dhaka on October 21, says a press release, reports BSS.

Dr. Ashraf Siddiqi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of BSS, attended the inaugural function as the chief guest.

M. Nurul Islam A. F. M. Abdullah Al Mamun and M. Ataul Hakim Sobel have been made President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively of the 19-member Executive Committee of the organisation, the press release added.