

## Metropolitan

## Dhaka Day by Day

## Whither coins?

by Fayza Haq

Is the small change fast disappearing? One hardly sees the ten poisha, five poisha and one poisha in everyday transactions.

Fifty years ago a fifty poisha bit would buy enough on a weekend to load the table with goodies. One poisha secretly left by the husband for the wife in a joint family system bought the young woman a handful of sweets for her evening tea.

Today the loose change like the 50 poisha or 25 poisha and the lesser coins does not buy much and is used only in post offices, medicine shops or given as alms to beggars. At the central telegraph office at Gulistan, if they owe you 50 poisha or less, you have simply to forget about it. The post offices, fortunately, are better at their small change payment & settling, though they tend to use stamps instead of coins for that purpose. In neighbouring India a local fifty poisha bit gets you a small plate of 'fuchki', but here you need Taka 5 for that small luxury. A rickshaw is for Tk 3 in Motijheel and Tk 5 in more posh areas. The shortest rickshaw ride is for Tk 3.

While in the subcontinent we have been using coins for hundreds of years the first state mint was set up in Lydia in Asia Minor in the seventh century B.C. This was followed by the Greeks and the Romans. Coinage also originated independently about the same time in China and spread to Japan and Korea.

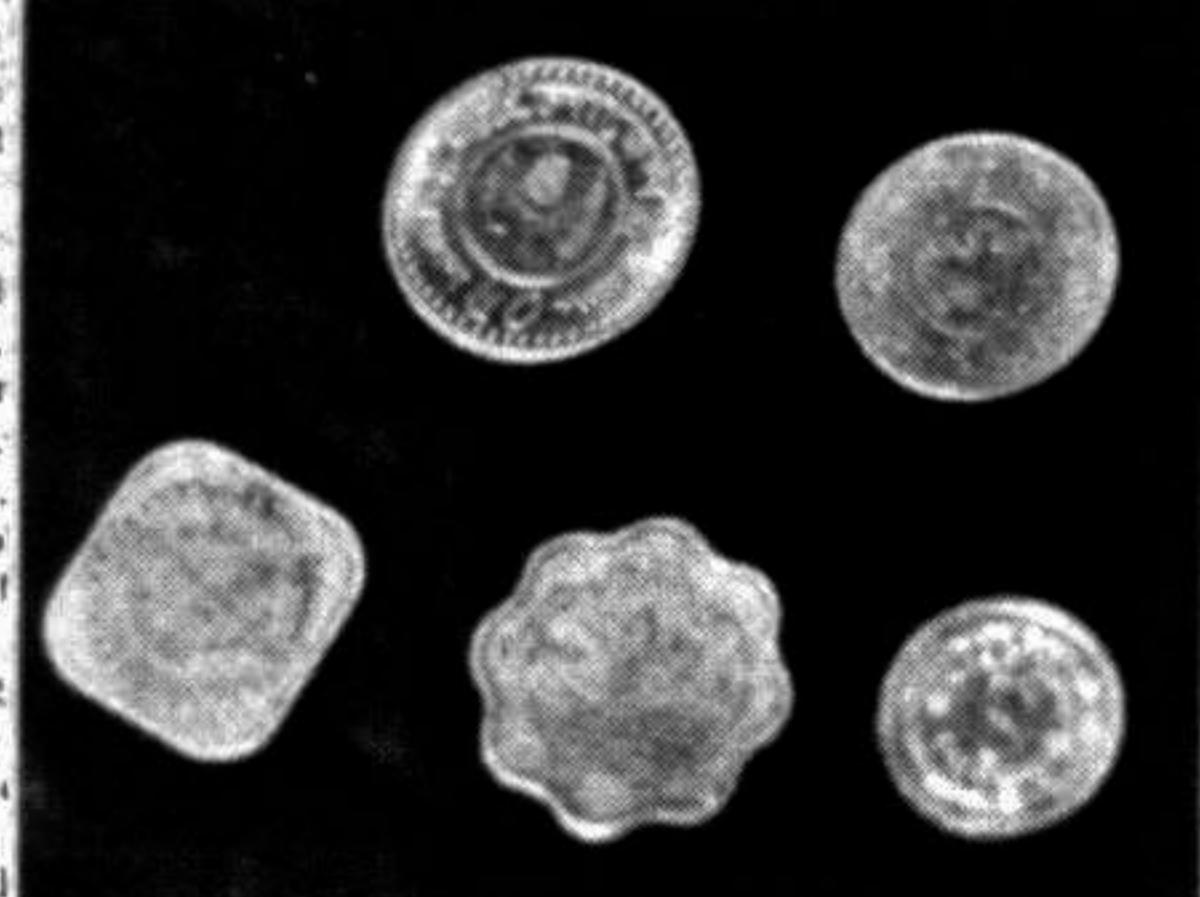
The coins in use in Bangladesh today are made in places like Canada and East Germany and are prepared from a mixed alloy.

"Thirty to forty years ago people kept coins because prices were less than coins such as the rupee coin," says M Yasin, a retired banker. "The cost of a cup of tea or a fruit bun or even 'puree' was one anna so that you got 15 annas back from the rupee."

"There is no dearth of coins. They are not in circulation because the cost of commodities are so high," M Yasin adds. "In the early fifties you saw 1-anna, 2-anna, 4-anna and 8-anna bits. By the sixties decimalization came in. Today due to devaluation the commodity price is high and the purchasing power of the taka is low," he continues.

"The coins have to be in circulation whether there is little use of them or not unless the government policy decides otherwise. Interest calculation and bill payment is done with the help of poishas," the banker says.

"Coins are heavy and people don't like car-



The coins of lost significance. Star photo

rying them. People will not even take Tk 10 in coins," remarks Shamim Chowdhury of the BCCI Bank. "It is only in case of prices such as that of 'Bata' slipper for Tk 99.99 poishas that you would need coins. Poishas are a negligible part of the transactions. It is more a book entry."

"Clients are not bothered about 50 poishas. When there is payment for Tk 13,000.50 poishas the figure is rounded off as Tk 13,001 or the poishas are not paid at all. The clients themselves will not haggle for 50 poishas. Even labourers and rickshawpullers deal in takas today," Shamim adds.

"Due to inflation nobody wants coins today," says Mr G Nawaz of the ANZ Bank. "If you give a coin to a beggar he or she will not accept it gladly. However the coin remains a unit of measurement of currency. The cashiers have a till box full of coins to make payment of bills which for example maybe for Tk 25.25 poishas."

"There may come a time when even the fifty poisha will disappear," says Haifuz Rehman, another banker. In Hong Kong, Singapore and London you require coins to purchase commodities. In Bangladesh however the egg seller and the fruit shop man will never ask in poishas. Prices are rounded up in takas.

"There is nothing that costs less than one taka. Even a box of matches or a rickshaw ride will involve paper notes and a single coin will not do," says another bank official, Mr Ali.

Commenting on the profession of changing money for changing notes, a phenomenon which has cropped up in old Dhaka and outside the central bank Mr Ali says, "It is a way of making a living. It saves people from the inconvenience of queuing up. If there is a demand for a particular service it will pay. If someone is prepared to provide some service, what is wrong in paying for these services?"

Even in countries where the currency is strong as in UK the one penny and five penny coins have disappeared before Christmas last year.

The disappearance of coins also spells bad news for coin collectors as their chances of procuring coins for pleasure are getting slim.



Members of the BCSR Samaj, an organisation for the unemployed staged day-long hunger strike in front of the National Press Club protesting attack on the residence of its candidate for Mirpur-11 Constituency on Sunday. —Star photo

## Cancellation of Matin committee recommendations demanded

Engineers Service Structure and Welfare Committee of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh demanded immediate cancellation and non-implementation of Model Service Rules proposed for autonomous and corporations and Matin Committee's recommendations on Cadre Services, says a Press release.

These rules and recommendations were introduced during the regime of the Ershad Government. Despite repeated demand from different quarters of the engineers and others, no steps were taken to abandon it. The interim government was also requested to dissolve these two reports but these were not carried into effect.

Member Secretary of Engineers Service Structure and Welfare Committee Engr. Md. Ruhul Matin in a statement, expressed deep concern about CONCOP recommended Model Service Rules. He said it would be detrimental to the efficient functioning of all public corporations and autonomous bodies as under these rules, higher education

were ignored. Opportunities for promotions was made at all levels for less qualified personnel, and for which, Sector Corporations would be deprived of qualified personnel in future.

Engr. Matin also regretted about the Matin Committee report and added that it failed to fulfil the interests of various Cadre Service and professionals.

He urged the Government to dissolve the Model Service Rules and Matin Committee report without further delay in the greater interest of the people of the country.

In his presidential address Dr. M. A. Rahman said that significant amount of money could be saved by preservation of fruits and vegetables if this solar drying technology could be disseminated to all villages of the country.

While inaugurating the

## Conduct of JS polls discussed

The Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf will visit Comilla today to meet and exchange views with all concerned officials in connection with matters relating to the conduct of the coming Jatiya Sangsad elections and maintenance of law and order during election, reports BSS.

He will be accompanied by the Election Commissioner Justice Syed Misbah Uddin Hossain and Justice Naimul Haq and other senior officials of the Election Commission Secretariat an Election Commission press release said.

The meeting will be held on this occasion at the auditorium of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, Comilla.

It will be attended by the concerned Divisional Commissioner, DIG of Police Sector commanders of the Bangladesh Rifles, Deputy Election Com-

missioner, All Deputy Commissioners and Returning Officers. Superintendents of Police, Upazila Nirbahi Officers and Assistant Returning Officers, District Adjutant of Ansar and VDP District Election Officers, District Information Officers and Officer-in-Charge of all thanas of greater Sylhet Comilla and Noakhali districts.

Govt urged to put Shalban oilfield into operation

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) President Shaiful Alam Prodhan in a public meeting in Tetulia on Sunday urged to put into operation the Shalban Oilfield Project, a party press release said.

The meeting was presided by Mr M.A. Gani.

## 1 cr ton vegetables needed a year

A training course on preservation of fruits and vegetables by solar drying leading to rural technology development at cottage level began Saturday morning, at the Institute of Food, Science and Technology (IFST) in Dhaka. reports BSS.

Organised by Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), the inaugural function of the first batch of this training course was attended by Dr. M. Waltuzzaman, Chairman BCSIR, as chief guest while Dr. M.A. Rahman Director-in-Charge IFST presided. Course Director Dr. Khondakar Kuddusur Rahman and Mr. Golam Kibria spoke on the occasion.

While inaugurating the

course Dr. M. Waltuzzaman said that country needs about one crore metric ton of vegetables per year for the eleven crore people. But one fifth of these products are spoiled he said adding this course has been arranged in an effort to check this spoilage.

He expressed the hope that this course will bear fruits in building cottage industries, based on preservation of fruits and vegetables by solar drying in all unions of the country.

In his presidential address Dr. M. A. Rahman said that significant amount of money could be saved by preservation of fruits and vegetables if this solar drying technology could be disseminated to all villages of the country.

Fifteen trainees from government, semi government, autonomous bodies and non-government organisations are taking part in this course.

## Dhaka -Dubai Biman flight from Feb 8

Biman Bangladesh Airlines will operate flight No-BG 017 to Dubai on February 8, says a press release, reports BSS.

The flight will depart at 1200 hours local time to reach Dubai at 1500 hours local time.

The return flight will leave Dubai at 1615 hours local time to arrive Dhaka at 2215 hours local time on the same day.

Biman earlier suspended its Dubai flight on January 15 in view of warlike situation in the Gulf.

People should vote for real democrats: Manna

Mr. Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Joint Convenor of Janata Mukti Party Sunday appealed to the people to elect those leaders who have respect for democracy in real sense of the term, reports BSS.

He was addressing a public meeting at his constituency at Shibganj in Bogra District, a party press release said.

Mr. Manna said honest, dedicated and patriotic leaders were required to run the country which was totally depended on foreign aid. He said for the first time an election was being held under a caretaker neutral government. The people should utilise the situation and elect honest and dedicated people, he added.

In his presidential speech party president Abul Basher called for taking up the initiatives of fulfilling the expectations of the workers, students, youth.

## 78 Bangladeshis arrive today

Seventy-eight Bangladeshi expatriates scheduled to return home on Sunday from Aqaba, Jordan will now reach Dhaka at 5:45 am today (Monday), airport sources said, reports BSS.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) chartered an Aeroflot flight to carry the Bangladeshis was due to reach Dhaka Sunday morning.

The Bangladeshi nationals including two journalists have crossed into Jordan from Iraq following the outbreak of war on January 17.

More than 70 thousand Bangladeshis employed in Iraq and Kuwait displaced by the gulf crisis had already returned home.

## Menon deplores narrow politics

Mr. Rashed Khan Menon, general secretary of the Workers Party, Saturday said, the Jatiya Party has got an opportunity to launch its activities for its political rehabilitation because of the 'narrow party politics' of bigger political organisations and in many cases for their irresponsible role," reports BSS.

Addressing a briefing meeting here of the party candidates for the parliamentary election, he pointed out that the achievements of the upsurge were being lost one by one due to this conduct of the bigger parties. For this mentality they are unable to contest the election together with those parties with whom they had participated unitedly in the democratic movement against autocracy, he added.

He regretted that due to the arrogant attitude of the bigger parties the efforts for the establishment of a government on the basis of national consensus and building electoral accord of the three alliances fizzled out. "We put forward these suggestions in defence to the expectation of the people for sustaining the victory of the upsurge," he said.

Mr. Menon, however, said his party and the 5-Party Alliance would continue their efforts for the establishment of a stable democratic process in the country.

In his presidential speech party president Abul Basher called for taking up the initiatives of fulfilling the expectations of the workers, students, youth.

## 35 development projects being implemented

Thirty-five development projects are being implemented at a cost of Taka 347 crore and 79 lakh including a project aid component of Taka 156 crore and 77 lakh under the Ministry of Agriculture, reports BSS.

Besides these, 15 technical assistance projects are being implemented under the Agriculture Ministry at a cost of Taka 10 crore and 40 lakh, an official handout said.

These projects came under discussion at the meeting on annual development programmes under the Ministry of Agriculture at the Secretariat on Wednesday.

Agriculture and Land Adviser A.M. Ansuzzaman was in the chair.

The agriculture adviser instructed all concerned to complete the projects within the estimated budget and time. He also directed the officials to be alert against unnecessary expenditure.

## BRTC's 30th anniversary of founding today

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) completes its 30 years today (Monday) as the pioneering public organisation in the field of road transport both as a passenger and cargo carrier, reports BSS.

The then government through an ordinance established East Pakistan Road Transport Corporation (EPRTC) on February 1961. The organisation which began its journey with four buses from its Motijheel depot, has been transformed into a massive body commanding several hundred buses and trucks going to dozens of points across the country.

After independence it was renamed Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) and began gradually expanding its network as a passenger and goods carrier. Presently BRTC established its network through inter-district coach, night coach, inter-district services for passenger and goods, city service and exclusive ladies service.

To commemorate the founding, the organisation will hold Milad Mahfil today at its office and unit offices throughout the country.

## Warm clothes distributed

Bangladesh National Buddhist Youth Federation distributed warm clothes among more than 300 poor and destitute persons on the occasion of sacred Maghi Purnima Friday, a federation press release said Saturday, reports BSS.

## TV Monday

5:00 Opening.  
5:20 News in Bengali.  
5:30 Carton Film: 'Frankenstein Junior And The Impossible'  
5:55 Shikhhangan: Educational programme  
6:20 Sports programme  
7:05 TV debate for students  
8:00 News in Bengali  
8:30 Jibana Janya  
9:00 Bulbul: Nazrul songs  
10:00 News in English  
10:30 Comedy series: 'Luelle Ball Special'  
11:30 News in English

The Press Note further

## Introduction of new subjects in Islamic Varsity clarified

The government Sunday in a Press Note clarified the position regarding new subjects introduced to the Islamic University and said it had not taken any policy decision regarding Islamic and madrasa education, reports BSS.

The Press Note said "attention of the government has been drawn to news items and editorial comments in a section of the Press regarding new subjects introduced to the Islamic University."

It said the Islamic University is a self-governing institution and that the government does not interfere in its academic activities. This government has not taken any action which may adversely affect Islamic and madrasa education, concluded.

## 150 scientific projects exhibited

Adviser for Culture Prof. Iajuddin Ahmed said in Dhaka on Saturday that the country have to remove the discriminatory educational system between urban and rural areas in the

greater interest of the people, reports BSS.

The country has lost village-based talent due to lack of educational facilities, he added while speaking at the concluding ceremony of 14th National

Science and Technology Week of district-level programme at Notre Dame College. Director of National Science and Technology Museum Dr Mobarak Ali

and Principal of Notre Dame College, Father Josep Pichot also spoke on the occasion.

Prof Iajuddin said, if we offer education facilities equally for urban and rural areas, the country will get more

talented scholars. He urged all concerned to continue science study and make best use of the appropriate tech-

nology evolved by our scientists.

Three hundred young scientists from the 11 educational institutions exhibited 150 projects in the Science Week.

Later, Prof Iajuddin distributed prizes among the winners.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

## Answer to Previous Puzzle

35 Flyer	HELP	NAP	RAMS
38 Lassos	OVER	IDO	ELIA
41 Mother	LENA	GOT	PITA
44 African river	DRENCH	TEETER	COTE
45 Everyone	50 Observes	ARE	PAR
47 Hindu queen	52 Wants	PETALS	PRETTY
49 Crocodile			