

Dhaka Day by Day

Children in the Dark

by Tulip Ibrahim

In some parts of the city streets as soon as the traffic lights turn red some little girls dash to the standing cars and rickshaws. They offer strings of flower to the passengers. Their pleading voices, hunger-stricken faces and tattered clothes touch the hearts of people.

The price is one Taka for each string. When luck favours they may earn five to ten taka in a day. These girls spend the whole day on gathering withered flowers, knitting them with threads and roaming around the streets for prospective buyers.

Elsewhere in the street a little boy with an earthen pitcher and a glass offers water to the passers by. "Cool water, sir", he calls out invitingly. Thirsty people take a drink of the sweet cool water from the earthen pitcher.

They give 50 paise for a glass of water. The little boy does not ask for the money nor does he question for whatever he is given. This little boy is aware that water is life and it should not be sold. He is also aware that people with money will not drink water from his pitcher, the purity of which is not beyond doubt.

Around the dustbins of the city small boys and girls rumple through the dirt and filth. Bits of papers, broken bottles, cans, in fact whatever catches their eyes are thrown into the big dirty bags they carry with them. These are sold to a junk store.

How about the "tokats"? These little boys are supposed to be junk collectors of the streets. At the price of one taka or two takas per head these are hired by political parties to chant slogans. When violent clashes break out between agitators and police, some of these poor boys may lose a hand or a foot leaving them to beg for the rest of the life. And not infrequently these boys are killed in such bloody

confrontations. People living in the slum areas send their children to gather dry leaves, twigs and branches of trees for fuel.

These small children, constituting a large portion of the floating population in the metropolis are victims of illegal child labour. Poverty in our country with its many curses forces these children to back-breaking work at a time they should be going to school to pick up their 3 R's. This is in clear violation at the International Labour Act which prohibits children below ten years of age to work.

These children go to work as soon as they learn to walk and articulate words. Their early years of life are spent on hard labour under scorching heat and pouring rain. The men or women they grow up to be are already far too exhausted and worn out.

What could the nation expect from the evils of child labour? Because child labour exists, poor people avoid family planning. They produce many offsprings to use them in early years as well as to depend on them in old age.

Small children, specially girls, are hired for domestic helps. These children perform most difficult household chores such as scrubbing the floors, grinding spices, washing etc.

In markets little boys carry heavily laden baskets which weigh twice their weight in return of a very small amount of money. There are other children who break bricks for construction works. The hard labour destroys the natural growth of the tender body. And mind.

The children should be one of our very first concerns. Both of the government and of the private citizen. Unfortunately, they come at the last of our list - if they occur at all there. We are the first of the nations of the world to not to know or even care to know that the 'child is the father of man'.



Being nipped in the bud

Consular convention to be signed with USSR during FM's visit

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman's three-day official visit to the Soviet Union, beginning July 9, is expected to provide a fresh impetus to the Bangladesh-Soviet friendly bilateral ties, reports BSS.

The Foreign Minister is paying the visit at the invitation of his Soviet counterpart Aleksandr A Bessmertnykh. What distinguishes the coming visit is that it will be a high level visit at political plane from Bangladesh to the Soviet Union after many years.

Rahman will discuss with the Soviet Foreign Minister the entire gamut of the bilateral ties. The two ministers will have an overview of the state of the bilateral relations and take decisions to bring the two friendly nations still closer to each other.

A major outcome of the visit could be in the form of signing a consular convention, the two countries have been negotiating this since 1975 and both sides have finalised the text of the convention in last December. The convention would be signed during Rahman's visit.

Besides, there is also a possibility of signing a memorandum of understanding in consular questions regarding the issuance of visas by the two governments to the citizens of the other country.

In addition, the two Foreign Ministers will discuss all issues of common interest with a view to strengthening the co-operative relations in different fields.

While Foreign Ministry officials describe the coming visit of the Foreign Minister as "important" diplomatic success

in Dhaka attach considerable significance to the visit.

Soviet Union being an important partner in Bangladesh's development efforts, the visit assumes considerable importance for political as well as economic reasons.

During the visit of the Foreign Minister, all aspects of the cooperation will come under review with a view to giving further stimulus to the ties. The two sides will discuss fresh areas of cooperation in different fields.

What's on Today & Tomorrow

Titumir College installation

Installation ceremony '91 of newly-elected Chhatra Sangsad of Sarkar Titumir College will be held today at 10 am at college premises in the city.

Barrister Mainul Hossain will be the chief guest of while president of the Federal Union of Journalists Reazuddin Ahmed will attend as special guest.

Amanullah Aman, Vice President, DUCSU, Khairul Kabir Khokan General Secretary, DUCSU and Rizvi Ahmed, Vice President, RUCSU will also be present as special guest.

Bazlur Rahman, Principal of the College and President of the Sangsad, will preside over the ceremony.

Chhatra Union

The Dhaka University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra Union will hold a meeting at the university's Madhu's Canteen on Wednesday at 4.30 pm. The meeting will discuss the prevailing campus situation and its next course of action.

Freedom Party

Freedom Party will hold a press conference on Wednesday at its central office at House No 48, Road No 15/a (New)Dhanmondi Residential Area at 5.30 pm. The chairman of the Party, Col (Rtd) Syed Faruk Rahman will address the conference.

Jatiya Party presidium meeting

An emergency meeting of the presidium of Jatiya Party will be held on Thursday at 7.30 pm at the temporary office of the party at Gulshan. Secretary General of the party Shah Moazzem Hossain urged all the members of the presidium to attend the meeting.

Abdul Hakim Bikrampur Memorial Council

Abdul Hakim Bikrampur Memorial Council will hold day-long programme on Thursday at Munshiganj at the death anniversary of politician Alhaj Abdul Hakim Bikrampur. — NA

Newsman assaulted

Asaduzzaman Asad, Chief Photographer of the daily New Nation, was abducted and beaten by a group of people Monday midnight, reports UNB.

He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with severe injury Tuesday morning.

Police and family sources said Asad (30) was attacked near Maniknagar in the city by a group of about eight persons while going back home by a rickshaw along with a relative.

BPTA urges Pay Commission report implementation

By Staff Correspondent

A workers' meeting of the Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association (BPTA) held on Monday urged the government to implement the pay commission report.

Held at the Primary Teachers' office at Mirpur, the meeting called upon the government to grant pay scale to the assistant headmaster, second class status to head master and similar pay scale for all the primary teachers given to other government employees of equal status.

The meeting was addressed by the President of BPTA Prof Abul Kalam Azad, General Secretary, Kazi Fazlul Huj and others.

Flash flood, depression this month

Flash flood and seasonal depression are likely in the country during the current month, Met office sources said on Tuesday.

The areas of Brahmaputra, Surma and Megna basins may go under flash flood, but of no serious nature, the sources said.

One or two seasonal depressions may form over the north Bay, the source said without elaborating.

Dhaka divisions may experience more rainfall than normal during the period while those of Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna an "expected rainfall" the source said.

The source forecast 370 mm to 400 mm rainfall in 20 to 22 days during this month in Dhaka division while the serious record of average normal rainfall was 336 mm in 21 days in the season.

650 mm to 680 mm rainfall is expected in Chittagong division, 380 mm to 410 mm in Rajshahi division and 430 mm to 460 mm in Khulna division during the month of July, Met office also said.

41 p.c. loss in power sector

Minister of the State for Energy and Mineral Resources DR Mosharrar Hossain Tuesday told the Jatiya Sangsad that system loss in power sector during 1990-91 was estimated at 41 per cent, reports BSS.

The system loss was due to both technical and non-technical factors, he added.

Replying to a question from Sardar Shawkhat Hossain Bakul (BNP-Narsingdi), DR Hossain said the present government which inherited this staggering system loss was determined to bring down the rate of this loss through some tough measures. He said system loss is there both in PDB and REB and elaborate steps were under way to bring down the rate of loss to a reasonable level.

Detailing the steps, DR Hossain said besides taking technical measures like installing more transformers, capacitors and meters, sealing meters against tampering and using better conductor, billing

and ledgers are being updated. He said special magistrates are being deputed to punish those who are engaged in pilfering power.

As for the employees who are frequently made responsible for power theft, the State Minister said prizes will be awarded for lowering system loss, while punishment awaits those who are responsible for the system loss.

Replying to supplementary from BAKSAL member Mohiuddin Ahmed and Awami League member Asaduzzaman, the State Minister said the country could save Taka 20 crore by reducing one per cent of system loss. He said according to an estimate of World Bank, maximum system loss due to technical and non-technical factors could be 23 to 24 per cent.

DR Mosharrar told the Sangsad that the industry did not suffer because of System loss as power generation exceeds the demand.

Rina rescued from Munshiganj

By Staff Correspondent

Sutrapur police on Tuesday rescued Rina (14) from a bus stand in Munshiganj who was abducted the day before.

Rina who came to appear in an interview at a garments factory was abducted from near the Sutrapur thana.

Sutrapur police also arrested her alleged abductors Younus, Rido and Hannan from the spot. Rina is now in the custody of Sutrapur thana. A case was filed with the police station.

Directive to restore glory of jute

Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid-ul-Haq on Tuesday stressed on designing a short-term plan for restoring the economic discipline in jute sector which had been heavily jeopardised during last nine years of autocratic rule, reports BSS.

Presiding over a meeting of the cabinet sub-committee on jute the minister directed the officials concerned to develop on appropriate programme covering a period of three to six years for restoring the past glory of jute and jute goods.

Industries Minister M Shamsul Islam Khan, State Minister for Jute Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, State Minister for Finance M Majibur Rahman, Jute Secretary M Asaf-ud-Dowla, a senior officials of the government and autonomous organisations were present on the occasion.

The meeting discussed in detail different issues prevailing in jute sector and made a number of recommendations for their solution. Reports on separation of losses incurred in different jute spinning mills, and financing of the mills under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) were presented in the meeting.

Bangladesh-Canada Youth Friendship Assoc formed

An 18-member Executive Committee of Bangladesh-Canada Youth Friendship Association has been formed recently in Dhaka, says a press release.

Md. Taifur Rahman, Md. Awlad Hossain Chowdhury and Ayesha Akhtar have been elected President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively of the organisation.

Editors hail Khaleda's decision

Sanaullah Nuri and AQM Zainul Abedin, President and Secretary General respectively of Bangladesh Council of Editors Monday said the historic announcement of Begum Khaleda Zia to switch over to the parliamentary system would establish the full democratic rule in the country, reports BSS.

In a written reply to a question from Dharendra Nath Saha (AL-Narail), the State Minister said a number of steps had been taken to check to loss.

Mannan told the House in a written reply to a question from Abdul Matin Khasru (AL-Comilla) that there are 75 textile mills in the country and 10 mills are in the state of lay off. Replying to a starred question from Mozammel Hossain (AL-Bagerhat), the State Minister said foreign cotton worth Taka 450.70 crore was purchased during 1989-90 financial year.

He said the Textile Mills Corporation has 40 mills out of which 12 are profitable and 28 are losing concerns.

Replying to another question from Mohammad Mozaher Hussain (CPB-Panchagar), Mannan said there are 818

Bhutanese Envoy calls on Mannan

The Ambassador of Bhutan to Bangladesh, Karma Dorjee, called on the State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Abdul Mannan, at his office in Dhaka on Tuesday, reports BSS.

TV Wednesday 5-00 Opening and recitation from Al-Quran 5-15 Recitation from the Geeta 5-20 News in Bangla 5-30 Mancho Natok 7-05 Natun Shilpider Ashor 8-00 News in Bangla 8-30 Prabaha 9-00 Film: Macgyver 10-00 News in English 10-25 Parliament roundup 10-40 Sanglap 11-30 Khabar/The News 11-45 Close Down

Training centre for garment workers soon

International Textile, Garments and Leather Worker's Federation (ITGLWF) will set up a vocational training centre in Dhaka for developing the skill of the country's garment workers, reports UNB.

Raja Gopal, President of the federation said this while addressing as chief guest at a garment worker's rally at Mirpur on Monday.

He arrived in Dhaka last week to see the conditions of the workers employed in the garment industries.

Referring to the situation of the garments industry in Bangladesh, Raja said most of the factories were violating labour and factory laws.

He urged the authorities to

take measures to implement labour and factory laws in all the garment factories in the country.

A Bangladeshi garment worker gets only 10 US dollar per month whereas a US worker earns the same amount in an hour, he said.

Mujibur Rahman Bhuiyan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik League addressing the rally called upon the garment workers to wage a united movement to realise their demands.

Presided over by Badruddoza Nizam, President of the Garments Workers Employees Union, the rally was also addressed by its General Secretary Tauhidur Rahman.

Weather Thundershower likely

By Staff Correspondent

Chittagong division experienced a heavy shower on Tuesday and the Met office forecast little change of weather during the next three days.

Met office said on Tuesday that rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at different places and a few places over Dhaka and Rajshahi division.

The highest rainfall recorded on Tuesday at Sitakunda was 117 mm while it was 20 mm in Kutubdia, 48mm in Cox's Bazar, 51 mm in Rangamati, 56 mm in Chittagong, 37 mm in Sandwip, 12 mm in Sylhet and 5 mm in Comilla.

Rainfall was also recorded in Chandpur, Faridpur, Barisal, Bhola, Patuakhali, Ishurdi and Khepupara.

A moderate rainfall is expected further in Chittagong division on Wednesday, Met office said.

Rainfall would increase further during the next five days. Temperature and humidity recorded on Tuesday in major cities and towns are:

Table with 4 columns: Cities/Towns, Temperature in Celsius (max, min), Humidity (9 am, 6 pm). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Srimangal, Comilla, Bhola, Tangail, Jessore, Mymensingh.

The highest temperature recorded at Jessore and the lowest at Mymensingh.

The next step was to send out applications for the research fellowship. And believe me it took some doing. Hunting for addresses. Electric-typing each application. Photocopying all the certificates. And stamps, stamps, stamps. Posted each envelope personally. Settled down to a long wait. The postman became Man of the Year. But every evening found an empty mailbox. Until a moment ago. "It's Harvard, no less!" I think I deserve a Gold Leaf now.

Advertisement for Gold Leaf cigarettes. Features a man in a white shirt looking at a book. Text: 'If you don't deserve it, who does?' 'Rich · Smooth · Rewarding'.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Crossword puzzle grid with clues. ACROSS: 1 Carpenter's tool, 4 Lucille, 8 Abound, 12 Hawaiian wreath, 13 Region, 14 Hindu queen, 15 Exit, 16 Norms, 18 Takes a vote, 20 Gaseous element, 21 Down: prefix, 22 Affirmative, 23 Department store. DOWN: 1 Strike, 2 Danish, 3 Handles, 4 Food fish, 5 Skill, 6 Inclined, 7 Paths, 8 Lintel, 9 Hearing, 10 organ, 11 Wrong: prefix, 17 Fruit, 18 French article, 22 Sweet potato, 24 Near, 25 A Spinks, 26 Antlered animal, 27 Fresh-water fish, 28 Moham-medan priest, 29 Flying mammal, 30 Chapeau, 32 Comes back, 33 "I've - a Secret", 34 Roman gods, 37 Spanish woman, 38 Interior, 40 Specks, 41 Irving ID, 43 Greek letter, 44 Change color of, 45 Blackbird, 46 Surflet, 47 TV's Danson, 48 Sched. abbr., 49 Mr. Lowe, 50 Outh.

Answer to Previous Puzzle grid with filled-in letters.