

Dhaka Day by Day

I Sent a Letter to My Friend

by Fayza Haq

WITH friends married and living abroad, the only way one can communicate with them is through letters. Long messages are time consuming and cost something to post, yet it is the only way of keeping in touch and of not being lonely in middle-age, when it is hard to make new friends. I know my husband in Mentone, Melbourne, checks his mail box everyday with eagerness. So does his brother, miles away at Fawkner. As for myself, I charge home, asking my mother every evening "Are there any letters for me?"

Missives from my married brother and sister also carry weight for me and give me endless happiness and contentment. Even a post card with a lazy line of "Hello!" and "Bye!" makes me feel remembered, loved and wanted. Telephone calls are top expensive between UK, Canada, New Zealand and Dhaka. Cards and letters must carry all the messages such as "please send me this medicine, or a burgundy coloured lipstick, if anyone comes to Dhaka."

The postman who brings the missives on his bicycle is naturally a favourite personality in my life. So is the postmaster who accepts my numerous scribbled jottings to the ends of the earth. This man who sits at the Sub-post Office at Dhanmondi, between the Eidgah Masjid and the Scholastica School, is another person I often deal with, and who I am invariably glad to find sitting with this tiny dingy office opened to the public.

I never find this person tired or peevish. He is ready with his stamps and change and serves you with a steady smile. Sometimes there are as many as twenty-five customers clustering the tiny room and around the window bars and the door. Yet he is always patient and deals with everybody, one at a time, never flaring up even when people come with silly demands such as requests for gum, or simply change for Tk 10. He does not have a franking machine, as there is in places like the P.O. Day and Night Post Office. But he manages his task quite efficiently. He often has an assistant to help him stamp the letters for posting. Sometimes I have seen the neighbouring "maulvis" lending a hand during rush hours.

Azizur Rahman Talukdar, 32, has been selling tickets ranging from five paise to Tk 20. He deals with letters sent to places all over the world varying from China, Japan, UK, USA to Europe, USSR and the Middle East. Aziz has to deal with money orders, letters, cards, revenue stamps and handles registration, valuable parcels, and postal saving certificates in the form of "Dak Ghar Shanchyapatra" which range from

Tk 100 to even Tk 10,000. He handles postal orders too, that go up to Tk 20, and are used when applying for jobs — for security purpose — for instance. Aziz prefers the Thursday as there is less rush on that particular day, as one tapers to the weekend.

Aziz has been dealing with the public for 12 years in different post offices in Dhaka. Neighbours come and hassle him not only to rush their mail, but also sometimes to get change. He naturally discourages this, but tries to help out the person who is in genuine need. He sends the mail that he receives to Jhikataola and then on to Kamalapur Railway and Mail Service, where the final sorting is done to distribute the letters in Bangladesh, or to send them overseas.

Born in Jamalpur, Aziz has been to the local school and has studied up to the intermediate college level. There is a provision for a house in his job but he has not been accommodated with one as yet. While he works from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 pm, he keeps in touch with the news by listening to the radio at 7 am and by reading the "Dainik Bangla".

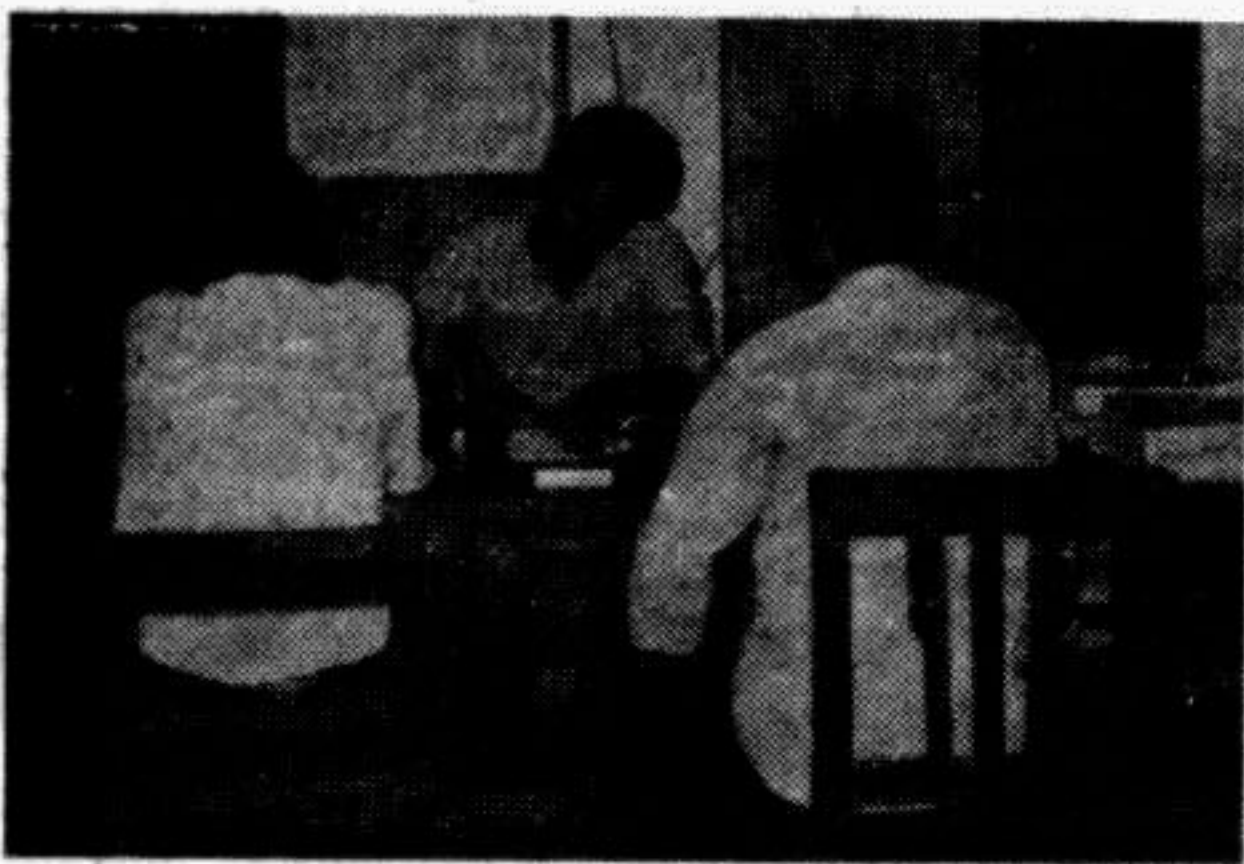
He has no respite while he is at work. His only break is for tea and biscuits, on which he spends about Tk 10 everyday. His travel to his home and back by bus costs him Tk 10 in addition.

He deals with about 400 customers everyday. On the whole he seals envelopes for local postage and stamps for mail within Bangladesh. But his foreign mail too fills baskets daily. I have never known Aziz to show any irritation as he tears and gums on numerous stamps or even handles items like "acknowledgement due." His entreaties in his books are also incessant and numerous.

In addition, he has to handle parcels, such as when people send "saris" or "lungis" as presents. But sending of parcels are usually done at the GPO rather than from the Sub-post Office, although there is provision for this task too.

Aziz has no bank account, and with a wife and two daughters to see to, he often has to borrow to make ends meet. They cannot even dream of going out for movies or to the Children's Park. They simply visit their relatives, when the urge to have a change takes place.

The ready smile that Aziz has for his customers would make you think he had no problem in the world and all was well with him. His is simply a nice guy who wants to do his work efficiently and please his customers. One wonders if he saves up his pent up frustrations for the homefront.



Aziz, the Postmaster, at work.

Shahabuddin may call a meeting of political leaders

Star Report

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is likely to convene a meeting of the political leaders to discuss modalities for making September 15 referendum a success.

The Acting President held a meeting with the Chief Whips and Whips of the ruling party and the Opposition in parliament. The two Chief Whips made an appeal to the MPs to make the referendum a success.

Justice Shahabuddin, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina may address the people over radio and television.

NAM FMs' meet a success, says Mustafiz

Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman returned Dhaka Tuesday after attending the 10th Non-aligned Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Accra, reports BSS.

"I consider the conference a success because it has cleared all doubts about the relevance of the movement in the changed scenario today," he told reporters at the airport.

The Foreign Minister led a five-member delegation to the meeting, which took place against the backdrop of a momentous change in the international scene marking the end of the cold war era.

The Non-Aligned Movement has greater relevance and more potential role now than ever before," he said adding that the movement that comprised the developing and Third World nations would now play an important role in improving the plight of these countries.

Rahman said Bangladesh played a pivotal role in the conference in airing the views of the developing, particularly the least developed countries.

"We drew the attention of the conference to the recommendations of the second United Nations conference on the LDCs in Paris last year so that the economic problems of these nations could be resolved," the Foreign Minister said.

Mr. Rahman addressed the conference on the issue of environment emphasizing its inseparable link to survival and development of the Third World countries.

The Foreign Minister, during his stay in the capital of Ghana, met his counterparts from different countries including Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Kuwait, Libya and Malaysia and discussed bilateral and other issues.

Supreme Court holiday today

The offices of both the divisions of Bangladesh Supreme Court will remain closed today (Wednesday) on the occasion of By-election, reports UNB.

The elections to be held to the 11 vacant seats of the Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, said official source.

One killed in road accident

A young man died in a road accident at Eskaton Road Tuesday afternoon.

Hospital sources said that the accident occurred when an unidentified man aged about 28 was crushed under the wheels of a vehicle while crossing the road in front of the passport office around 4-30 pm.

The victim died on way to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Car stolen

A private car belonging to Imrul Chowdhury has been stolen from the parking compound of Zia International Airport Tuesday at 2-30 pm. His car bearing No. Dhaka-VHA-8711, four door, silver colour Toyota Starlet.

A case has been registered with Cantonment Police against the Supervising Agency Messrs. Jesco International Ltd. who are in charge of the parking space at Zia International Airport, says a press release.

TV Wednesday

5.00 Opening announcement. Al Quran Programme Summary
5.15 Reading from the Gesta
5.20 News in Bangla
5.30 Shouravy Gourabey
5.55 Sports Programme
7.05 Nutan Shilpider Ashar: Programme of new artists
8.00 News in Bangla
8.30 Biswa Parikrama
9.00 Film: MacGyver
10.00 News in English
10.30 Muktadhara
11.30 Khabar/The News
11.45 Closing

Identify troublemakers, Khaleda urges students

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Tuesday night urged the students to help maintain peaceful atmosphere in the educational institutions and identify the elements responsible for violence there, reports BSS.

Begum Zia was addressing the newly-elected office bearers of the Gouripur Munshi Fazlur Rahman College of Daudkandi when they came to seek her blessings at her Sugandha office. The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) won the full panel in the college union election recently with Mujibur Rahman Mujib as Vice-President and Jahangir Alam as the General Secretary.

The student leaders of Hasnur College of Daudkandi, who won last year's college union election, also came to meet her.

Begum Khaleda Zia said the students were the future of the nationalist forces. They will keep the national flag fluttering high in the sky, she hoped.

Recalling the glorious role of students in the movement against the autocratic regime, the Prime Minister said, "you will now have to identify the problems of the common people along with pursuit of knowledge."

Referring to the 19-point programmes, she said the stu-

dents have to work so that the programmes were implemented with total success.

Begum Zia said the present government had made the highest allocation for the education sector.

She said, "production and development were the aim and objective of the democratically elected government."

The Prime Minister congratulated the student leaders for their success in the college elections.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources, Dr K Mosharrar Hossain, State Minister for Social Welfare and Women Affairs Tariqul Islam and DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, MP were also present.

Bangladeshi statistician honoured in Canada

Dr. AKMD Ehsanes Salch, a Bangladeshi statistician teaching in a Canadian University, has been elected Fellow of the Institute of the Mathematical Statistics (IMS), reports UNB.

This is the highest honour given by IMS and Dr. Salch is the first Bangladeshi statistician to be elected Fellow of the Institute.

Dr. Salch, Professor of Statistics and Director of the Ottawa-Carleton Institute for Graduate Studies and Research in Mathematics and Statistics of Carleton University, was elected at the 14 Annual General Meeting of IMS recently held at Atlanta, USA.

Besides being the Fellow, Dr. Salch received twice the "Scholastic Achievement Award" of Carleton University and shared the "Ogawa Award" with another Japanese statistician for the best paper in the Journal of the Japan Statistical Society.

Dr. Salch is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society in UK.

According to a survey, he had the highest rate among the Canadian statisticians with more than 100 papers published in many top statistical journals.

Operation Doorbar 861 held in Ctg so far

CHITTAGONG, Sept 10 : A total of 861 persons were arrested and 119 fire arms recovered in 14 police stations of Chittagong district under Operation Doorbar '91 from August 17 to September 7, a district police press release said Thursday, reports BSS.

The arrest included absconders, illegal arm-holders, suspected criminals and masts. The recovered fire arms included SMC, country made revolver, pistols, pipe guns, single and double barrel guns.

Lohagara and Banskhal were first and second among 15 police stations of the district in rounding up criminals and recovery of arms.

DIG of Police, Chittagong

Farewell reception to JU students

JU Correspondent

The outgoing students of Jahangirnagar University were accorded a farewell reception by the Jahangirnagar University Central Students Union (JUCSU) at the Social Science gallery of the university Monday evening.

Vice-Chancellor and JUCSU President Prof Kazi Salch Ahmed presided over the function. In his speech the Vice-Chancellor hoped that the students would enhance the glory of the university.

Operation Doorbar

Range, MA Khaleque today inspected the recovered arms at the office of the Superintendent of Police Chittagong and commended police officers and constables for making 'Operation Doorbar' a success.

US Foreign official due Sept 20

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Teresita Schaffers is expected to arrive in Dhaka on September 20 on a three-day official visit, reports UNB.

Officials said Tuesday the entire gamut of bilateral relations would be reviewed during the US high official's tour. Diversification of economic cooperation, especially debt relief and increase in US aid, will figure high at her discussion with the officials.

The officials consider Schaffers' mission very important, hoping that it would create a new horizon in cooperation between Bangladesh and the United States.

Of the total 2,989,227 million US dollar bilateral aid provided since 1972 till August 1991, 814,050 million US dollar is credit and 2,175,177 dollar grants.

Besides, outstanding debt on account of food aid under PL-480 amounts to 1483,237 million dollar.

Eid-e-Miladunnabi Sept 21

The Holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi will be observed on the night of September 21, reports BSS.

This was decided at a meeting of the National Moon-Sighting Committee, held Monday at the conference room of the Islamic Foundation, with its President and State Minister for Religious Affairs, Prof MA Mannan in the chair.

After reviewing the reports of the Moon-Sighting Committee of the holy month of Rabiul Awal (1412 Hijree), reaching from different district administrations, offices of the Islamic Foundation at district and divisional level, Meteorological Department and from other sources, it was observed that the Moon of the Rabiul Awal was not sighted in the sky Monday.

On the basis of this, it was unanimously decided in the meeting that the first Rabiul Awal (1412 Hijree) begins today (September 11).

SAARC workshop on education begins Sept 28

A two-day SAARC workshop on modernising education system will be held in the capital on September 28-29, reports UNB.

Education and Cultural Affairs Minister AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury will inaugurate the workshop at the International Conference Centre.

Organised by the Ministry of Education and National Curriculum and Text-book Board, the workshop will be participated by education specialists from SAARC countries.

Publication ceremony held

Publication ceremony of "Raktabez", translated work of an African Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka's play, was held at the National Museum auditorium Tuesday, reports UNB.

The play was translated into Bangla by a young writer Khairul Habib.

Presided over by chairman of the English Department of Dhaka University Dr. Syed Manjurul Islam, the function was addressed by Director General of Bangla Academy Prof. Harunur Rashid.

Noted poets Belal Chowdhury, Ataur Rahman, Abed Azad and Mohammad Nurul Huda also took part in the discussion.

Irregularities in promotion of BIWTC employees alleged

Workers Union of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) Tuesday demanded immediate resumption of the operation of ferry Enayetpuri and end to irregularities in promotion of the employees, reports UNB.

The ferry Enayetpuri remained at the dock as two government backed union leaders put it under lock and key since August 31 forcing the corporation to incur a loss of about Tk 24 lakh.

This was alleged by BIWTC leaders at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka in the evening.

General Secretary of the union Shukkur Mahmud addressed the conference which was attended by Working President Mahbulul Alam, Vice President Aslam Sareng and Shorab Hossain Shamim.

Mahmud alleged that one Hafizur Rahman, a driver and Anjad Hossain, a Master, were illegally promoted and given to serve the ferry Enayetpuri.

In the face of stiff resistance by the workers and employees, the newly-promoted persons locked the ferry since

August 31 creating inconvenience to the passengers, Mahmud said.

He said the BIWTC management had acknowledged that the promotions were made in violation of the existing laws of the corporation and ordered a new committee to resolve the issue.

But those two union leaders ignored the management's order and kept the ferry out of operation, Mahmud said.

He demanded cancellation of all 15 illegal promotions and fresh appointments through legal process.

The union put forward a six point demand which included punishment to those officials who had violated the promotion procedures.

BIBM computer course concludes

A three-day training course on "Computer Appreciation" conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) ended in Dhaka Monday, reports UNB.

Director of the Institute ABM Mahbulul Amin Khan presided over the concluding session.

BCL (N-S) demands arrest of Alam's attackers

By DU Correspondent
Bangladesh Chhatra League (N-S), student wing of JSD (Inu) in a statement on Tuesday demanded immediate arrest and trial of persons involved in the attack on its worker Mohammad Alam in Bogra.

The statement alleged that a group of miscreants sheltered by Awami League backed Chhatra League cut off the Femoral Artery of Alam's leg with ulterior motive to kill him.

Relief for flood victims

Ministry of Relief has so far sanctioned 215 tonnes of wheat, 120 tonnes of rice, 3650 pieces of saree, 3650 pieces of lungi, 4915 tins of biscuit and Taka 5 lakh 55 thousand as gratuitous relief for the flood affected people of the country, reports BSS.

These sanctions were made following an emergency flood review meeting held at the Conference Room of the Ministry of Relief with State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan in the chair, and official handout said.

The State Minister directed the concerned officials to take immediate measures to tackle the current flood situation.

ECONOMIST REQUIRED

The World Bank Resident Mission in Bangladesh requires the services of a well trained Bangladeshi Economist to be recruited as a Local Consultant. The contract will be initially for a period of nine months and is renewable. The resource person will work as part of a team of three resident Economists and is expected to make a significant contribution to the building up of a comprehensive socio-economic data base and setting up of a quantitative framework for macro-economic analysis and projections. Data gathering and compilation will therefore be an important part of the assignment. Candidates with at least a Masters degree in Economics from a foreign University, good academic results and less than 35 years of age are encouraged to apply. Adequate knowledge of the Bangladesh economy and local institutions and sources of data, sufficient familiarity with computer-based data processing and econometric techniques and some research experience are important requirements. Candidates are requested to apply to the Economics Unit of the World Bank Resident Mission, 3A Paribagh, Dhaka with detailed curriculum vita and evidence of qualifications and experience by September 25, 1991. The selected candidate is expected to commence work by mid-October.

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