

Dhaka Day by Day

A Visit to the DU Library

by Esha Shana Chowdhury

A four-de-force through the DU library creates an ordeal. It is supposedly the biggest library of the country. But like other institutions of Bangladesh it too is plagued with inefficiency and nonchalance on the part of the management.

The interior of the building gives one a Gothic impression: the dark passages, the air stinking of damp and mildew, soot dangling from corners and to top it all the never flushed toilets! The spiders spin their nets on the huge shelves without any interference from their human enemies. Books covered with thick layers of dust have almost changed their original colour. Anyone allergic to dust or with pharyngitis would collapse let alone study in this unhygienic environment. Dr. Slowman, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Essex remarked: "a library is the university's heart. Weaken it and the health of the whole University is affected." Funnily enough in this case we can regard the expression "health" quite literally.

The library building was constructed in 1965 - an heirloom the Pakistani government bequeathed us with. "What is your contribution to the upliftment of the condition after the liberation?" was our repeatedly asked question; but the reply was in strange - so we may assume the answer is in the negative. Beyond doubt of course, this library can boast of a rare collection of books and periodicals. It



A student selecting a book from the Dhaka University

contains at the present moment over 500,000 volumes including bound volumes of periodicals, excluding 40,000 valuable manuscripts. Of the total Tk 12 crore of loan sanctioned for Dhaka University, only a negligible amount is commissioned for the library. With this insignificant amount it currently adds 8,000 books annually and subscribes to 500 journals. But the purchase is not at all adequate for the 30,000 student population and 1000 teachers of 36 departments. The books that are most valuable should have several copies. Instead the students, perpetually grumble over their scarcity. Moreover the teachers are given more privilege and are allowed to keep a book as long as they wish. All the strict rules and regulations

are dumped on the poor student! It is to know that even the staff are conscious of the mismanagement but do virtually nothing to improve the situation. The Deputy Librarian expressed genuine concern for reform and modernization. He engineered a short-term plan, for which two years should be allowed. He offered priorities to the circulation control, high-tech alarm system and small Micro-computer based administrative systems. This initial project will prove extremely useful as a means of familiarising the University authorities as well as library staff with the basic techniques involved in mechanization. Air condition in here is a necessity and not pleasure, to eradicate the condemnation.

The traditional system, cries out for reform. But any attempt to modernization is made impossible for lack of a proper chief. It is pathetic that since 1972 DU library does not have regular professional librarian. Surprisingly, the selection board that is supposed to nominate a librarian has not yet been formed. It takes about a year to found a selection committee with distinguished members.

What an irony it is that almost 20 years have elapsed without any positive action. Didn't somebody say procrastination is a sin? From time to time professors from other departments make their guest appearances as the acting librarian and honour the chair. Their professional ineptitude in this area have turned the place to a pandemonium. The junior workers take advantage of the boss's inexperience and enjoy the extra hours of gossip. Prometheus stole the fire of knowledge from Zeus for mankind. Should mankind allow the gift of Prometheus fall to ruin?

We approached a veteran official to discuss the prospects of improvement. As usual with a resigned spirit he thrust the blame initially on the Grants Commission, then on the authority and finally on the inexorable fate: "You live in poor country my child! Perhaps, but should it be our last word? Not Man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

Two house committees formed

The Jatiya Sangsad Saturday formed two house committees called, "the petition committee" and "the library committee," reports ISS.

Headed by Shakhil Ruzzaque Ali, the petition committee comprised the parliament members Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, I K Siddique, Mia M Mansur Ali, Tofael Akhund, Advocate Faziul Rabbi, Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali, Mattur Rahman Nizami, Iqum Farida Hassan, and Shaludul Islam.

The "library committee" which is headed by Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panui is composed of Khondoker Abu Taher, Maulana Ataur Rahman Khan, Dr Abdul Moin Khan, Prof M Rezaul Karim, M Strajul Islam, Abul Kalam Azad, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury and Dr AKM Asjad.

Biman's founding anniversary observed

The 20th founding anniversary of Biman Bangladesh Airlines was observed in Dhaka yesterday with much enthusiasm and fervour, reports ISS.

A milad mahfil was held at Biman Engineering Hangar premises in the city. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan, Additional Secretary in-charge of the Ministry Habibur Rahman, Biman's Managing Director Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, officials and employees attended the milad.

Munajat was also offered seeking divine blessings and continued progress of the Airline.

Earlier, the state minister met the editors of the local dailies.

Additional Secretary in-charge of the Ministry, Biman's Managing Director, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and senior officials of the Ministry and the airline, among others, were present on the occasion.

Voice of America, BBC, Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh put up special programme on the occasion. The minister told the delegation that the government has already finalised the matter of formulation of a disabled welfare trust with an initial fund of Taka 50 lakh. He said measures will also be taken to appoint deserving blind teachers against vacant posts in blind schools run by the government in future.

Amendment of Press Council Act '74 under consideration

The Government is actively considering amending the Press Council Act 1974 for making it a more effective body.

This will be in pursuance of the recommendations of the Press Commission report of 1984.

Officials told UNB the amendments might include changes in its nomenclature and empowering the council to suspend accreditations of journalists, publication of newspapers, public sector advertisements, postal concession etc for violation of ethics.

The Press Commission headed by late Ataur Rahman Khan had recommended several amendments to the Act but these remained unimplemented due to political reasons.

The new amendments will free the Council from a common allegation that it has become a 'paper tiger', officials said.

Sources said, the council might wear the new name of Bangladesh Press Council and consists of 21 members rather than the existing 14.

The members who earlier used to be nominated by the President will now be nominated by a committee consisting of Speaker of Parliament and leaders of the government and the opposition in the Sangsad.

The amendments are also likely to incorporate provision for reporting publicly on developments in press ownership and control.

A proposal to authorise the council to use punitive power was, however, not shared by its present chairman.

Three working journalists are at present members of the Press Council. It has been proposed that this number should increase to at least five.

Instead of three editors of newspapers and news agencies, the new amendments are likely to accommodate five editors of newspapers of whom three will be from daily newspapers and two from the periodicals.

It has been proposed that three MPs should be nominated members.

The amendments are likely to allow the council to consider, investigate and deal with complaints about the conduct of the press and the conduct of the persons or organisations or authorities towards the press.

A new section is likely to be added to the Act authorising the Council to levy fees or rates from registered newspapers and news agencies depending on their circulation and other status.

Women Forum hails Khaleda

Bangladesh Women Forum has hailed the declaration by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia that 60 per cent posts of teachers in the country's primary schools would be filled up with women and provision of legal assistance for the oppressed women be made, reports ISS.

In a statement yesterday Advocate Ferdous Sultana and Prof Ashrafunnessa Khan, President and General Secretary respectively of the Forum said with this announcement of Prime Minister, two of the seven demands put forward by the Forum earlier, had been realised.

Advertisement for The Daily Star: "It's new just for you". The Daily Star is pleased to introduce a new column where individuals and organisations can publish Birthday and Anniversary Greetings, Congratulatory and Condolence Messages, Get-Well/Good-Luck Wishes, Birth/Death Announcements, In Memoriam, etc. at nominal charges. For booking details, please contact: Advertisement Manager. Phones: 246023-4, 863035.

Advertisement for Munni Rahman: "In Memory of Munni Rahman". We remember always Munni Rahman. We deeply mourn and remember Family Friends and Munni Memorial Committee. Includes a portrait of a woman.

EC firm to hold UP polls in free, fair atmosphere

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf yesterday (Saturday) called upon all to consolidate the new trend of democratic system introduced in the country through making the coming union parishad election as all-

Shah Abu Zafar elected Sramik Party president

The biennial council session of the Jatiya Sramik Party on Saturday elected Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and M A Gafur President and General Secretary of the party respectively.

The council held at the auditorium of the Dhaka district Sports Association was inaugurated by Dainik Janata Editor Senaulah Nuri. It was addressed by Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury MP as chief guest and Barrister Maudud Ahmed MP as special guest, while Shah Moazzem Hossain MP was the main speaker of the council.

out success, reports ISS. Reiterating the commission's firm stand to hold the coming elections in a free, fair and impartial atmosphere, Justice Rouf said in clear terms that no attempt to create chaos to serve the interests of a handful of vested quarters would be tolerated.

Justice Abdur Rouf was addressing three separate meetings at Patia and Lohagara upazilas in Chittagong District and Chokoria upazila in Cox's Bazar district yesterday.

High officials of the Election Commission, district and upazila level officials of government, semi-government and autonomous bodies, officials engaged in conducting the union parishad polls, political leaders and the elite and candidates attended the meetings.

The chief Election Commissioner said that the law enforcing agencies had been directed to take due measures including punitive actions against those vested quarters without considering the level of their influence. He said the overall situation in those areas, where law and

order could be deteriorated during the elections, had been kept under constant watch. He called upon the officer-in-Charge of the respective thanas to take necessary steps in this regard.

Justice Rouf said it was really encouraging that the candidates in the coming union parishad elections had already expressed their desire for helping impartial and proper holding of the election.

He also called upon the concerned officials to play their due role with honesty and sincerity for smooth and impartial holding of the elections. "Strict punitive action would be taken against anybody who would be found guilty of willful laxity in discharging duty during the polling or engaged in any activity subversive to the election rules," he warned.

Reception: The ambassador of the Union of Myanmar in Dhaka, U Soe Myint hosted a reception in the city last night on the occasion of the 44th anniversary of the Independence Day of that country, reports ISS.



Sheikh Amanullah, president of Teachers Federation, addressing a rally near Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Story on Page 1.

National Girls Guide Camp '91 concludes

The 7th National Girls Guide Camp '91 concluded at Baropara in Gazipur Friday, reports UNB.

The torch of the 'Mahatanbu Jalsa' of the six-day long camp was inaugurated by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on January 3.

Begum Zia in a brief address encouraging the attending Guides, Ranger and Commissioners of different regions said the aim of the girls' guide movement was to serve the distress humanity.

She hoped that the guides side by side with their study would contribute to the development activities of the nation. Begum Zia was made patron of the Bangladesh Girls Guides Association. Association Commissioner, Zeba Rashid Chowdhury presented a crest to the Prime Minister, said a press release on Saturday.

TV Sunday schedule: 5.00 Opening announcement, Al Quran, Programme summary; 5.10 News in Bangla; 5.20 Recitation from the Bible; 5.30 Maake Niya; 6.00 Educational programme: Can you do it; 6.30 Sports programme; 7.05 Tagore's Song; 8.00 News in Bangla; 8.30 Prabaha; 9.00 Drama series: Oshin; 10.00 News in English; 10.25 Parliament round-up; 10.40 Raagrong; 11.30 Khabar/The news; 11.40 Monday's programme; 11.45 Closing.

'Ties with Tehran good'

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alaouddin Brojerdy will arrive in Dhaka January 11 on a four-day official visit to Bangladesh, officials said Saturday, reports UNB.

Brojerdy, during stay in city, will call on Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, besides official talks with Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman.

The talks will cover various aspects of bilateral relations, particularly trade and economic cooperation, the officials at the Foreign Office said. Manpower export to the

Gulf country is likely to figure prominently in their discussion.

About ten thousand Bangladeshis are now working in Iran.

The sources described the present Dhaka-Tehran relation as "extremely good". The visit would further strengthen it, he hoped.

The two countries having Joint Economic Commission (JEC) has recently signed an agreement on introduction of air services between the two countries.

Weather: Dry weather likely. By Staff Correspondent. Dry weather is likely to prevail all over the country during the next 36 hours beginning 6 pm Saturday, Met office forecast. Sky will be partly cloudy over Rajshahi division during the period. Night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over Rajshahi division and likely to remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country. Met office also said. Light rain may occur in subsequent two days over the northern region. Cold wave will continue for another couple of days. Temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns on Saturday were: Cities/Towns Temperature in degree Celsius Humidity in percentage Max Min 9 am 6 pm Dhaka 23.2 11.4 76 68 Chittagong 23.2 11.5 80 73 Khulna 22.5 11.5 80 76 Rajshahi 22.0 10.0 82 76 Dinajpur 22.6 7.5 87 70 Srimangal 23.0 10.0 84 78 Cox's Bazar 23.0 13.0 71 71 Barisal 23.0 10.0 83 72 Rangpur 22.6 7.0 87 77 The lowest temperature was at Dinajpur. Sunset at Dhaka on Saturday at 5:25 pm and sunrise Monday at 6:43 am.

Notice Inviting Tender of RHD. 1. Tender Notice No: 53 EE RHD, Bogra Road Division of 1991-92 (2nd Call). 2. Name of work: Providing levelling course and seal coat at 3rd KM part of Bogra-Sherpur Road under RHD, Road Division, Bogra during 1991-92. 3. Estimated Cost: Tk. 3,55,485/00 only. 4. Earnest Money: Tk. 7,110/00 only. 5. Time allowed: 25 (Twenty Five) days from the date of issue of Work Order. 6. Eligibility of Contractor: A to E class contractor under general category of RHD. 7. Name of offices of availability of Tender Bid: Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Bogra/Rangpur/Dinajpur/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division-II, Bogra. 8. Name of officer to receive Tender Bid: 1). Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Rangpur. 2). Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Bogra/Rangpur/Dinajpur. 9. Last date of selling tender document (within office hours): Up to 11-1-92. 10. Last date and time of receipt of tender: Up to 12-30 P.M. on 12-1-92. 11. Date and time of opening of Bid: At 12-45 P.M. on 12-1-92. Mozammel Hossain Chowdhury, Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Bogra.

Advertisement for Shahjalal University of Science and Technology: "শাহজালাল বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়". ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক সন্মান শ্রেণী. Includes details about the award ceremony and contact information.