

Dhaka Day by Day

Of Balloons and Cylinders

by Sharier Khan

"Dear God, if you receive this letter please send me a reply," was a letter signed by Shantana. This letter or a little note was written in a callous manner by a child. She posted it by air mail, tying it with a gas balloon hoping it would break the barrier of the sky and reach God.

Balloons can always impress children and can make an irritated mother smile by bribing it to her crying children. Among children, gas balloons are most popular.

Around the city there are not many spots where gas balloons are sold. Near the Manik Miah Avenue there are a few balloon vendors with their gas cylinders. Their business is booming every year. This is because, according to the balloon-sellers, buying habit in favour of balloons is going up every year.

Chan Miah, 35 years old, with his short beard and multi-coloured balloons of various shapes, may create an impression of an angel to the children. He looks happy too.

"Large number of balloons are sold every winter—this is the season I'm making up for the dull sale for balloons during the monsoon season."

"December 16th is one of the special occasions when my business reaches its peak," says Chan Miah. "My net income is not below 100 takas each day," he says.

Chan Miah's most expensive balloon is a pillow-shaped one-meter long balloon which costs

ten takas. "They are for the rich children," says he. "Balloons of such shape are the latest edition in the balloon market of Dhaka city—it was available from last year," he elaborates.

These vendors make their own hydrogen gas in their own cylinders. Old cylinders are bought for two to five thousand takas. A quick production of hydrogen can be done in such cylinders by using a proportionate mixture of aluminium, caustic soda, zinc and water. Within ten minutes of this preparation 200 small balloons can be inflated with hydrogen.

Innocent though they may seem, but these gas cylinders are rather dangerous. While the gas is inside it is creating a tremendous pressure—it can burst with an effect more destructive than a grenade. "I know cylinders can burst and make this fun business a horrible mess," says Chan Miah. "That is why, I don't preserve gas in the cylinder, I just make it in the cylinder and pump it into the balloons." He also told me of his awareness regarding few cylinder bursting incidents, which killed a few people.

There is another way of preparing hydrogen," says another vendor. "It is mainly prepared from 'china' and smells foul. It cannot produce a high quality gas," he adds.

A balloon pumped with that gas will never reach God. Wherever he may be, one presumes and fears.



The scholarship awarding ceremony of Majedul Islam Education Trust organised by Greater Mymensingh Samity was held at the National Museum auditorium on Saturday.

PM distributes blanket among footpath - dwellers

It was a momentous night for the footpath dwellers of the metropolis last Friday when the rootless people rubbed their eyes open to a spectacle, reports UNB.

Their surprise soon turned into joy of the chilly night when they found no other personality but the Prime Minister himself distributing blankets among the shivering shelterless poor.

Begum Khaleida Zia distributed blankets among members of the floating population in several city areas.

About 700 blankets were distributed at several places in New Market, near High Court and Gulistan Cinema Hall, Baitul Mukarram and adjoining Stadium areas, near Jonaki cinema hall, along the Malibagh-Sayedabad link road during a two-hour drive.

Accompanied by Red

Crescent Chairman Syed Shahidul Haq Jamal and Farida Hasan MP, the Prime Minister also entered some slum dwellings in these areas.

Children, women, the aged—all were delighted by this generous gesture at a time when a biting coldwave sweeping the country was also felt in the capital.

The Prime Minister in early November last year instructed the Red Crescent Society for undertaking warm clothes distribution programmes among the poor.

About 40,000 pieces of warm clothes, including blankets, have been distributed in the cold-gripped several northern districts.

She had also called upon the police to arrange distribution of blanket and warm clothes among the poor.

Expulsion of Golam Azam demanded

By Staff Correspondent

Ganatantri Party has demanded immediate expulsion of Prof Golam Azam from the country.

A joint meeting of the party's central presidium and the secretariat ending at midnight Saturday night strongly resented that a Pakistani citizen Prof Golam Azam had been staying and participating in the country's politics despite his visa for coming here expired long before.

Chaired by the party Chief Syed Altaf Hossain, the meeting alleged that a close ally of the ruling BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami recently elected Prof Golam Azam its Ansar (Chief).

It refuted the meeting of the party's presidium and the secretariat on January 18 and 19 to discuss necessary amendments and changes in the constitution of the party.

Party General Secretary Azizul Islam Khan presented a report on preparation of the conference.

Peer Habibur Rahman, Ahmedul Kabir, Ali Haider Khan, Nurul Islam, Mohibur Rahman, Mahbubur Rahman, Abdul Kuddus, and Kamrul

Ahsan Khan addressed the meeting.

Prajanma '71

Prajanma '71, an organisation of the offsprings of independence martyrs, slated on Saturday the appointment of Pakistani citizen Golam Azam as the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami.

In a statement it said that it is a plea to politically rehabilitate a conspirator against independence and killer of thousands of freedom fighters.

Touhid Raza, secretary of the organisation, demanded explanation from the government on the issue.

Mustafiz retires

Education Secretary Mustafizur Rahman was accorded a hearty farewell on completion of government service at a meeting held at the conference room of the ministry Sunday with Education Minister Jamiruddin Sirar in the chair, reports BSS.

DU degree (Pass), Subsidiary exams date shifted

By DU Correspondent

Degree (Pass) and Subsidiary examinations of Dhaka University of '91, scheduled to be held on January 30 have been rescheduled on February 10.

Traditional Master degree examinations under traditional system for the year 1988 scheduled to begin on January 15 have been shifted to February 10, '92.

Details of the examinations will be announced later.

BNP fails to establish law and order: Siraj

By DU Correspondent

Shahjahan Siraj, MP said that the BNP government had failed to establish the rule of law in the society and to institutionalise democracy in the country.

The discussion on "The role of student politics in emerging Bangladeshi nationalism" was arranged on the occasion of the 44th founding anniversary of Chhatra League at the National Book Centre in the city on Sunday.

The speakers said that some political parties were fueling the campus terrorism for long time.

The discussion was participated by its former General Secretary Abdul Malek Ratan, poet Al Mujahid with its President Biazur Rahman in the chair.

Youth Crescent's procession for peace

Members of the Youth Red Crescent, now on a week-long winter training camp in the city, yesterday brought out a colourful peace procession to proclaim "peace for humanity", reports BSS.

The procession, started from the Residential Model School and College, the venue of the camp, has traversed the roads and highways along Sher-e-Bangla Nagar before terminating at the camp site.

The processionists composed of both boys and girls carried placards, kistons and banners inscribing slogan in favour of peace worldwide.

Teachers, accompanying the trainee youths from across the country, officials of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) and members of the managing committee of the society joined the procession.

Chairman of the BDRCS Syed Shahidul Haq Jamal led the procession.

DUJ meet today

An emergency meeting of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will be held today at 4 pm at the union office, reports BSS.



'Tempo' workers brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding trial of the killers of tempo driver Kalu Mia.

Eliminate sources of tension among SAARC states: Mostafiz

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman Sunday opened an international seminar in Dhaka on "South Asian Security" with a call to create better political and economic climate in the region to facilitate its economic growth, reports BSS.

Cooperation and understanding among the South Asian nations are on the increase but it is necessary to eliminate the sources of tensions that bedevil the healthy atmosphere in the region, he told the three-day seminar being attended by scholars and academics from different countries including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Russian Federation, China and Japan.

Organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), the seminar will devote itself on the theme "South Asia's security in the 1990's: Primacy of its internal dimension" and is expected to make recommendations on how best to create a better political and economic environment in the region.

National Professor and former Foreign Minister Shamsul Haq was special guest on the opening ceremony which was also addressed, among others, by A K H Moshed, Chairman, Board of Governors, BISS and Brigadier (Retd) Abdul Hafiz, Director General of the Institute.

Sena Paribar's exhibition begins Feb 2

A handicraft exhibition arranged by the Sena Paribar Kalyan Samity will be held at the Old Airport area, Tejgaon from February 2 to 7 in Dhaka Sunday, reports BSS.

A number of stalls at the exhibition will be allotted on first come first serve basis.

The Foreign Minister referred to the easing of tensions on a global scale in recent times following remarkable transformation in the world and said all these might have cast some positive impact in the South Asian climate.

But he noted that factors that have for decades troubled the inter-state relations were deep-rooted and could not be eliminated overnight by extra-regional changes.

"In any case, positive global changes can not relieve the countries of South Asia of the responsibility for creation of a framework of regional peace and security," Rahman observed.

In this context, the Foreign Minister referred to the current tensions in Bangladesh's ties with Myanmar and said the two countries not only share many common problems but also share common values as well as common border.

"We believe our neighbour has an equal stake in making our border, a border of peace and in removing the causes of tension and misunderstanding," he said.

Rahman stressed that durable peace could only be based on mutual respect and each other's sovereignty and a shared concern for the interest and welfare of the people.

Emphasizing the need for greater economic cooperation in the region, the Foreign

Minister referred to the SAARC and said Dhaka had deep commitment to the forum which was conceived by President Ziaur Rahman as a catalyst in sustainable development in South Asia.

He said this forum also meant for strengthening the basis of confidence building in this region.

The Foreign Minister said the seminar was of special significance to Bangladesh which last year underwent a mass upsurge resulting in the toppling of an autocratic regime that caused terrible damage to democracy and economy of the nation.

The new democratic government led by Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia, was committed to consolidating the foundation of democracy and making every effort for the welfare of the people, he said.

Professor Shamsul Haq, in his speech, said economic well-being of the region lay in the success of removing political tensions in the area as far as possible.

It is essential that climate in the region improve further so that the thrust could be on the economic matters that would benefit vast multitude living in South Asia.

3rd cub camporee concludes

The third National Cub Camporee of Dhaka region ended Sunday at the National Scout Training Centre at Mouchak, Gazipur, reports BSS.

Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah attended the concluding ceremony as the chief guest while the President of Bangladesh Scouts M Mahbubuzzaman was present as special guest.

Senior officials' team leaves for Bangkok

A 19-member team of senior officials of the rank of Joint Secretary leaves for Bangkok today (Sunday) on a fortnight's study tour, reports UNB.

The tour is part of the three-month-long eleventh senior staff training course arranged by the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, official sources said.

Led by Additional Secretary of the Establishment Ministry, Md Nazrul Islam, the team includes BPATC governing body member and course director Dr. Anisuzzaman and course coordinator M Wahiduzzaman.

The officials will visit Prime Minister's secretariat, Finance Ministry, Agriculture Ministry, Industries Ministry and Central Bank of Thailand and observe their activities on external resource mobilisation.

On return home, the members of the team will prepare a report on feasibility of applying their experiences in the context of Bangladesh. The team will return on January 20.

BAU Fisheries Hons exams Feb 4

By DU Correspondent

The B Sc Fisheries (Hons) part II examination of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) for the year 1989 and the B Sc Fisheries (Hons) part one examination for the year 1990 will commence on February 4 and February 18, respectively, said a notification issued by the Controller of Examinations of BAU.

69 arrested on various charges

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested 69 persons on various charges from different parts of the city on Sunday.

Tejgaon police rounded up Delwar Hossain Dila and Shahidul who have been facing many charges from Begunbari area.

In a separate raid Lalbag police arrested one Ilias with four crackers from the Shahid Nagar area of the capital. He will be produced before the court today (Monday), police said.

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.

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What's on today

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held today (Monday) at 1.30 pm at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Rotary Club of Dhaka North

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North will be held today (Monday) at 5.30 pm at the Hotel Sonargaon.

Rtn AFM Nurul Alam will speak on past and present of USSR at the meeting.

National Drama Festival '91

Dhaka Nattam, a drama group will stage 'Chhintai' on the sixth day of National Drama Festival '91 today (Monday) at 6.30 pm at the auditorium of the Shilpakala Academy.

The drama was written and directed by Jahangir Hossain.

Bangladesh Jana Parishad

An emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of the Bangladesh Jana Parishad will be held today (Monday) at 4 pm at its office at Sidheswar.

Weather

Cold wave to prevail

By Staff Correspondent

Cold wave would prevail over the country during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Sunday.

Night temperature remained below normal by 2-4 degree Celsius on Saturday, Met office said adding that dry weather, however, would prevail over the country.

Night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius during the next 36 hours over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Chittagong division and likely to remain nearly unchanged over Khulna division.

Little change in weather would be noticed in subsequent two days, Met office also forecast.

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

and towns on Sunday were :				
Cities/towns	temperature in degree Celsius		humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6
pm				
Dhaka	23.0	12.0	78	60
Chittagong	23.4	12.0	84	62
Khulna	22.2	9.5	76	71
Rajshahi	22.0	8.0	72	77
Dinajpur	22.5	7.2	90	72
Srimangal	23.4	7.4	88	74
Cox's Bazar	23.0	13.4	71	67
Barisal	23.0	10.3	77	73

The lowest temperature was recorded at Dinajpur.

The lowest temperature on the day was recorded at Dinajpur.

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