

Dhaka Day by Day

Of Rabbits, Raisin Cakes and Doves

by Fayza Haq



Ulfat and Rukhsana with their bag of tricks.

What better way can one think of entertaining children on a Christmas Day than a magic show? Ulfat and Rukhsana Kabir held the host of children agog at the Alliance Francaise with their performance with their bag of tricks.

"Magic is 80% psychological, 10% mechanical and 10% skill. We draw the attention of the viewer and misdirect him. The performance is an illusion. Some naive people may think it supernatural but everything is a trick or an art," Ulfat explained about magic.

Ulfat has been interested in magic since a child of eight when a peon at this school showed him an empty magic box which was mysteriously filled with match-sticks. Then he saw a magic show at his dad's office and this aroused his curiosity further. The magician, who has been performing for 20 years learnt the basics of magic from a Bangla book on magic "Ovinabho Magic" by Alladin. He wrote to Alladin that he wanted to learn more and he was fortunate that the magician was in Chittagong, where he himself lived.

He took lessons every Sunday and when Alladin's assistant left for India in '63, he replaced him at the age of 12. Since then he has been performing in public. He performs shows at "Panda Garden" every Friday, and has shown his skill in China in '90. He has been to Thailand, India and Hong Kong to learn more about the art.

He teaches magic at his own house at Kabi Jasmuddin Road in North Kamalapur. He takes batches of 12 people which include men, women and children, charging Tk15,00 for the course. He gets Tk 3,000 to Tk 5,000 for each of his public performances. "The private performances are more often than not for the embassies and the foreign circles. I sometimes do trade promotional magic, as in the case of Ciba Geigy," Ulfat added about his work. He has been performing on TV every month for the last six months.

Ulfat does charitable work as for the SOS orphanage at Shaymoli, for Families for Children, at Sreepur, for Cheshire Home and for Terres Des Hommes. He has even performed at Rant Khong, at Garo Hills, beyond Mymensingh, in a programme which was arranged by a church. He has performed before a visiting Saudi

and Chinese generals too. He is a member of the Brotherhood of Magicians USA that send him a regular magazine "Linking Ring" for which he pays US\$ 35 a year. "In USA magicians have about 500 shows a year but here in Bangladesh a magician cannot come anything close to that," Ulfat commented. "It is a pity that the Parjaton" does not use local magicians to attract foreign visitors. We have items that are typically eastern and this would appeal to the visitors" he added.

Among the items presented was the baking of a cake from saw dust, a flower, an old egg, grease from a candle, raisins and bits of paper, which were transformed into a cake, which the little boy from the audience, who helped to "bake", ate with delight. Plucking of the coins from the clothes, faces and bodies of the children, out of nowhere, also pleased the onlookers. So did the trick about the bowl of rice which doubled before one's eyes and then was transformed into a bowl of water.

A silk piece was magically changed into a stick of cane, and next this cane became once again a piece of silk. There was also the act of the vanishing gloves where the magician's gloves were put into a bag and then strangely reduced to scraps of paper, which were eventually burnt. There was next the lighting of the candle through the arm, where a lit candle was passed through an arm holding a container. When a live rabbit emerged from fire and a balloon was transformed into a dove the children seemed fascinated.

Pieces of silk and billiard balls came out of the mouth of the magician. While children simply sucked at empty straws, a jug of milk appeared to be drained off, although it was held separately, and feet apart. There was then the vanishing rabbit, that was shown in a house, and when the house fell apart the rabbit disappeared into nowhere. In the "water of Bangladesh" act a pail of water was emptied from time to time and yet appeared strangely filled each time.

There were many other tricks that the children and their accompanying parents appeared to relish. It is good when an art like magic moves from the streets to the homes and public places, and is acknowledged as a skill to be admired and enjoyed.

Biswas, Khaleda greet Birendra

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has felicitated King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal on the occasion of his birthday, reports BSS.

In a message to the King of Nepal, President Biswas expressed his confidence that the existing traditional bonds of deep friendship and close cooperation between the two neighbouring countries and fellow members of the SAARC would further grow in depth and dimension in the coming years to the mutual benefit of the two peoples.

In another message Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has felicitated King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal on the occasion of his birthday.



The election of the Elephant Road shop owners was held in the city yesterday. — Star photo

MEMORIUM



Ranjit Selim
All close and dear ones,
please pray for her
departed soul. 28.12.90
Selim Family

'Conscious decision a must to contain population boom'

Former presidential adviser and renowned social worker Azizul Haq yesterday emphasised the vital role a family can play in containing population boom in the country, reports BSS.

"Conscious decision of the family is a must to achieve natural size of our population, he said, adding "Conscious decision, however comes from education."

Haq was speaking as the chief guest at a national debate on "Education in Family is the Precondition for Planned Family" held under the auspices of Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB). Held at Shaheed Mozuddin Auditorium, the function was chaired by Alamgir M A Kabir, President of FPAB.

A total of 12 college students from different parts of the country participated in the lively debate that lasted over an hour. The participants were chosen from contests held at district and divisional levels, the organisers said.

Kazi Anisur Rahman and Zahir Anwar, honorary General Secretary and Secretary Youth Affairs respectively of the association and journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Haq said, the basic unit of the society is family from where the people get first and foremost education. "It is the family education which lasts and is followed by succeeding members," he added.

He said, unless people are educated through family, tangible results in family planning programme can not be achieved.

Describing the debate as "enlightening and of different nature," Haq said through the deliberations of the participants it has been amply demonstrated that they are very much aware of the main problem of the country. He said if the educated youths work consciously, the present bleak picture in the national life will be over.

Gias Kamal Chowdhury said that he had learnt a great deal

from the debate and added that it had brought into focus the latent potential lying in our country. He said youths must know our glorious past and taking pride of that they should work hard to overcome the present backwardness in different fields.

The honorary secretary general gave a brief resume of the activities of the association in motivating the people particularly youths in favour of planned family. He said similar debates were conducted at different levels to arise consciousness and also involve the larger segment of the population in family planning programmes.

Sharmin Naz of Momenunnessa Girls College, Mymensingh was adjudged as the best debator, while Tubaitshi Rubab Mattin of Vikarunnessa College, Dhaka became second. Mirza said Iqbal from Sylhet was declared third by a three-member jury who included Syed Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury, a renowned journalist.

What's on today

Publication Ceremony at Press Club

The publication ceremony of the book 'Muktijuddhe Shaheed Sangbadik Spiritikatha' will be held today (Monday) at 3.30 pm at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium in the city.

Journalist Mahfuz Anam and Harun Habib, who fought the country's Liberation War, will discuss on the book, a compilation of the writings by the near and dear ones of the journalists who embraced martyrdom in the war.

At German Cultural Centre

The certificate awarding ceremony of the training on small industrial project feasibility and appraisal will be held at the German Cultural Centre auditorium in the city today (Monday) at 4 pm.

Chhatra Front meet

A meeting of the Dhaka Metropolitan unit of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front will be held at 3 pm today (Monday) at the organisation's central office here.

Chhatra Front President of the Central Committee Belal Choudhury will preside.

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central

The 436th regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held today (Monday) at 1 pm at the Family Lounge of Dhaka Club in the city.

Seminar on English Teaching

A two-day international seminar on "English teaching in South Asia: South Asian literature in English: Designing a syllabus in American literature" will begin at 10 am today (Monday) at the Bangladesh Management Development Centre auditorium.

Baitus Sharf Darus Shefa Hospital

Planning Minister Zahiruddin Khan will inaugurate the indoor department of the Baitus Sharf Darus Shefa Hospital located at 149/A, Airport Road in the city today (Monday) after Asr prayer.



Bangladesh Railway Project Employees Welfare Association brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding regularisation of their jobs. — Star photo

Weather

Dry weather to prevail

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather will prevail over the country during the next 36 hours commencing 6:00 pm Sunday. Meteorological office forecast.

Night temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged during the period over the country.

The sun sets today (Monday) at 5:21 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 6:41 am.

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

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	25.8	12.1	82	76
Chittagong	26.7	14.0	89	77
Rajshahi	25.0	9.8	85	84
Khulna	26.2	10.0	91	70
Barisal	26.5	11.8	100	86
Cox's Bazar	27.6	14.8	76	78
Sylhet	24.5	12.5	82	73
Dinajpur	23.5	10.0	88	82

The lowest temperature of the day 8.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Iswardi.

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