

Dhaka Day by Day

"A Reservoir of Confidences"

by Fayza Haq

When asked as to why Dr. Marc Carborieau provoked his listeners at the round-table discussion on "Social Stratification among South Asian Muslims," held recently at the Alliance Française, he replied, "My talk was based on the findings of the caste system still prevalent among Muslims who live in Nepal. What I have said, was reported to me by the people themselves, like the 'fakirs', barbers, and butchers, who considered themselves as inferior to the rest of the population in Nepal, where I carried on my research."

Dr. Carborieau continued in his defence of his ruffling of the sensibilities of the experts in a country which is a predominantly Muslim one. "I have recorded marriages that were there between different socio-economic stratas, but they remained 99 per cent only. There are no doubt, occasions when people of different social standings have partaken meals together. But segregations have prevailed."

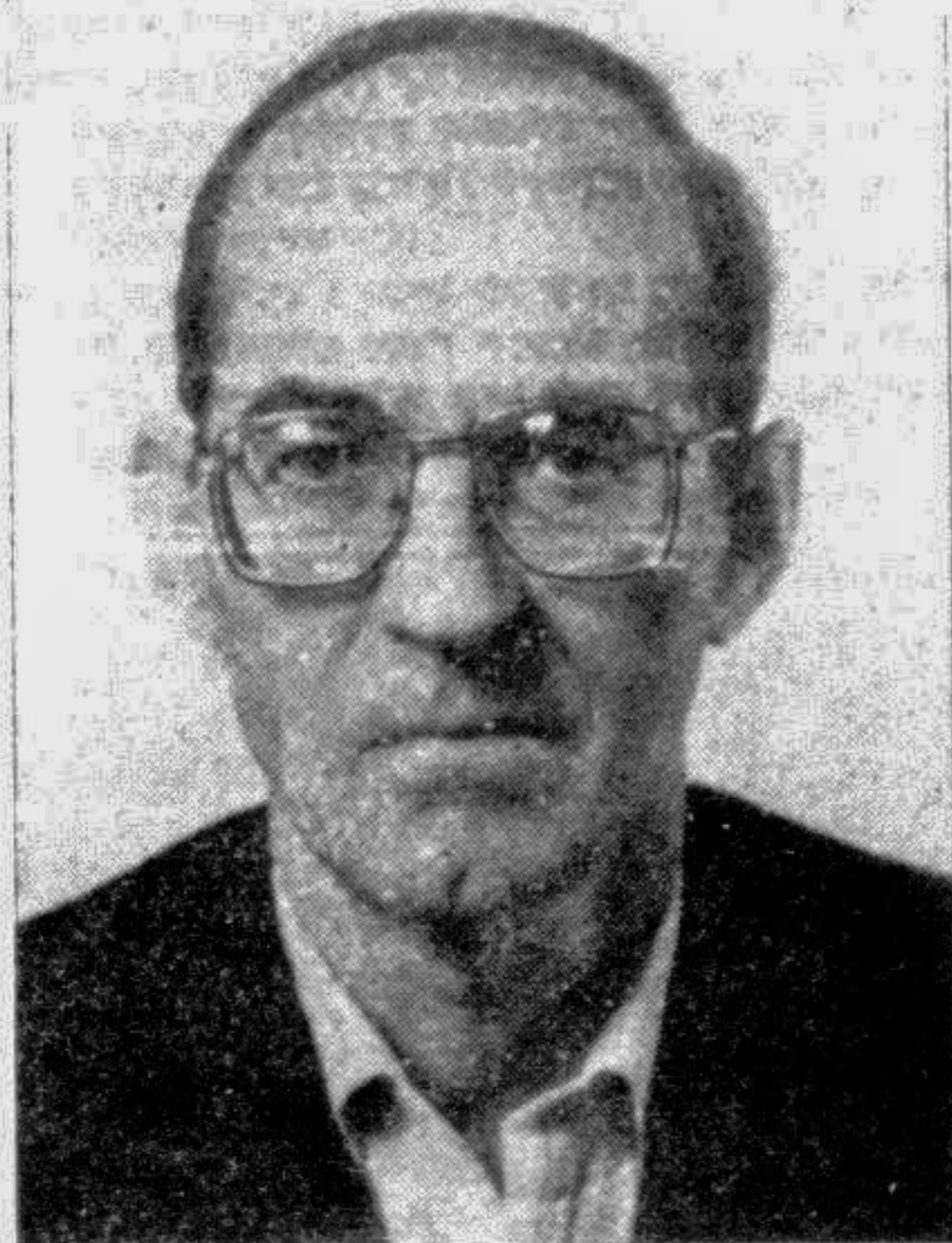
The Director of Research at CNRS, who is rated as a specialist in the Sub-Continent, continued, "The segregation that I found in Nepal was not necessarily based on religious beliefs. There are no doubt, differences in the rural areas and the capital Kathmandu. Studying as Social Anthropologist, years back, my empirical research results, which I gathered as a teacher in Nepal, are accurate."

He added "I am only too aware of the fact that Islam, as propounded by the Holy Koran, and the teachings of Prophet Mohammed, is against the caste system. Believe me, I know that Islam preaches equality of mankind, as perhaps no other current religion of the world does. I admit that the upper-class of individuals, both in the capital and rural areas of Nepal, do not object to the fact that people such as barbers and weavers, whom I emphasised in my talk, do not always object to giving their daughters in marriage to people in different social stratas, if they happen to be educated and refined."

The professor continued in his explanation for stirring up a furor at the round-table conference, mentioned earlier, "I knew that the topic of the discussion was a controversial one. I presented my research piece with a purpose: it was a way to begin a lively discussion and make the listeners and experts, present at the round-table, to express their own views and bring forth factual details to back their questions and opposing views."

He further emphasised, "I knew that I would antagonise my listeners, but I have enough experience of contact with South Asian Muslims, as I have lived for six years at New Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Almora (North India), Nepal and have visited Algeria twice. I have also spent time in Turkey and Egypt."

Dr. Carborieau continued in the same vein. "The questions flung at me were the usual questions, which a Muslim audience comes up with. I know that the experts of Islam, the world over, are ready to discuss the topic. I believe that the Socio-Anthropologists at the discussion, did get my points, which I gathered from my experience. I find that the people do object to my talks in public, although in private they confide that the Muslim religion is still a stratified one."



Dr. Marc Carborieau

"I have lectured on the same subject," he continued, at the Oxford Institute of Islamic Studies, which is manned by South Asian Muslims. They too were aware of social stratification among the Muslims, the world over. There was, for instance, an individual there too who strongly objected to my views in public. However, when I met him in private, he admitted that I was correct, after all, and he quoted an anecdote in which Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (founder of the Aligarh University), once said that he did not establish the Aligarh University for the 'juhahs' (weavers), he added.

"As a teacher of French in Nepal in '63, the professor insisted, I had good relationship with the inhabitants of the rural areas of Nepal, (where I taught for seven years) and they told me about their own lifestyle themselves. I did not badger them with any questions. I was simply a reservoir of confidences," the professor added.

"I wanted to do some 'village study' which was in vogue at that time, and I happened to be in touch with people of the lower strata of life such as the Muslim barbers, weavers and bangle sellers, whom I referred to in my talk," Dr. Carborieau continued, offering explanations about how he had come to his conclusions in "Social Stratification among South Asian Muslims."

Giving his impression of Bangladesh during his 12-days stay, the expert on Social Anthropology of Islam in the Sub-Continent, said, "As I do not speak Bangla, I could only communicate with the local people except the intellectuals of the Dhaka University. I have met some of the people who were at the seminar that I presided over, who asked me pertinent questions. To me, Bangladesh, looks familiar to what I saw in North India, but as a professor of Islamic studies, I feel that people are rather reluctant to speak about Islam, although they did so at the discussion at Alliance Française. I do not pretend that in western societies the problems that I talked about are different."

In his conclusion, Dr. Carborieau added, "I do not believe in the theory that the reason for conversion to Islam, in the Subcontinent, was to gain a better social status."

The majority of the converts in South Asia came from the middle-class strata of society and not from the 'untouchables'. Those who were attracted to Islam were people who had economic dealings with the Muslim rulers as farmers or as well-to-do artisans.

The professor found time to visit the Lalbagh Fort, and to deliver five lectures which included one at Chittagong and others at the Departments of Sociology, Islamic History and Culture, and the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

The knowledgeable and vociferous participants at the round-table conference included Dr. Parveen Hassan, Terese Blanche, a French Socio-Anthropologist, Dr. Md. Ibrahim, Dr. A. K. Arif, Dr. K. M. Mohsin, Dr. Mahboob Ahmed and Sadek Khan. They had numerous pertinent questions for the visiting professor, and the discussion was a fruitful one for anyone inclined towards Social Anthropology.

New policy on foreign training discussed

The ninth meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on Establishment Ministry was held yesterday at Jatya Sangsad Bhaban, reports BSS.

State Minister for Establishment Md Nurul Huda presided over the meeting while the members of the committee, Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Mohiuddin Ahmed MP, Dr TIM Fazle Rabbi MP and Md Shamsudohha MP were present.

The meeting discussed the new policy on foreign training of the government servants.

In his introductory speech the State Minister hoped that this time —befitting training policy — will help implement the government human resources development programme which can play a positive role in the economy of the nation.

Nurul Huda said the permanent selection committee of the ministry, headed by the secretary of that ministry, is the final authority from now on to select the candidate and can pass on the nomination directly to the donor country or agencies.

Additional Secretary of the Establishment Ministry SM Akram elaborated the new policy.

Establishment Secretary Md Hasinur Rahman and other high officials of the ministry and parliament secretariat were also present.

New institute on management in Ctg soon

CHITTAGONG, Mar 2: A new institute under the name and style —Chittagong Institute of Management (CIM) — will be established in Chittagong soon to provide management training facilities to concerned personnel, reports BSS.

Disclosing this to newsmen at a press conference at his Batali Hill residence this evening, convener of the Organising Committee of CIM, Salahuddin Quasem Khan, said that the Swiss Centre for Appropriate Technology, AK Khan Foundation and the Government Commerce College Ex-Students Association were providing necessary support for setting up the institute.



Maruf's painting show begins from today

A week-long painting exhibition of Maruf Ahmed, who lives in Germany, begins at La Galerie, 54, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani today, says a press release.

A member of the German Artists Association, Maruf has travelled from Bonn, Germany with his most recent works. He held exhibitions in the galleries of Budapest, Vienna and Barcelona.

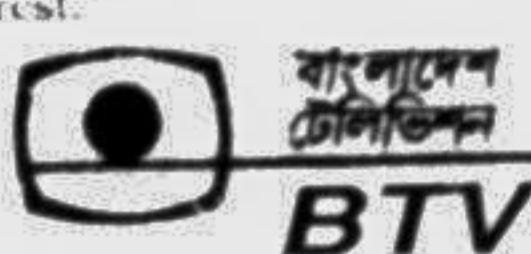
The exhibition will be inaugurated by Agha Yusuf, chairman of Erba and Associate Companies. Artist Prof Aminul Islam will speak on Maruf's works.

The show will remain open till March 9, daily from 9 am to 8pm.

Appointments

Bangladesh Ambassador to Egypt M Nurunnabi Chowdhury has been appointed member of the Planning Commission, reports UNB.

An official handout yesterday said the government had also appointed Abdus Sali, Officer on Special Duty (Secretary) at the Establishment Ministry, Secretary at the Ministry of Environment and Forest.



Wednesday

- 5.00 Opening announcement Al-Quran
- Programme summary
- 5.10 News in Bangla
- 5.25 documentary film on the occasion of National Day of Morocco
- 5.45 Mahe Ramzan
- 6.15 Hamd and Naat
- 6.40 Open University
- 7.05 Unmesh
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 Special programme in memory of Abdus Salam
- 9.00 The Fall Guy
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Parliament Round up
- 10.40 Ujiban
- 11.30 Khabar/ The News
- 11.45 Closing

Change social attitudes towards disabled: Mannan

Minister for Labour and Manpower Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday called for changing social attitudes towards the persons with disabilities and ensure their due position in society, reports BSS.

He was addressing the inaugural session of a three-day workshop, arranged to formulate a national policy for the disabled at the Academy for Planning and Development here.

The National Forum of the Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) and the Voluntary Health Services Society (VISS) jointly organised the workshop with assistance from Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM).

The Minister said a large number of people every year fell victims to disabilities for want of simple health consciousness. He urged all concerned to make concerted efforts for the prevention of disabilities and build up social awareness in this regard.

Mannan also stressed the need for formulating a proper policy for the overall welfare of the disabled, taking into consideration the changing social and family structure.

Secretary of Social Welfare Ministry Prof KM Fariduddin, who attended the function as the special guest, observed

World Muslim leaders greet Biswas

The leaders of the Muslim countries have sent messages felicitating the President Abdur Rahman Biswas, on the auspicious advent of the holy month of Ramzan, reports BSS.

In separate messages they expressed the hope that the fraternal people of Bangladesh and the entire Muslim world would continue to achieve further progress, peace and prosperity.

They also wished him as well as the people of Bangladesh good health and happiness.

President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, President Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan of UAE, King Hussain of Jordan, Amir of Qatar Khalifa Bin Hamad al Thani, Amir of Bahrain Isa Bin Salman al Khalifa, King Hassan of Morocco, Sultan of Oman Haboos Bin Said, President of Palestine Yaseer Arafat and President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of Maldives, were among those who felicitated the President.

Chinese envoy calls on Health Minister

Chinese Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Bangladesh Zhang Xujiang yesterday called on Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf at his secretariat office, reports UNB.

They discussed Chinese cooperation in the health sector of Bangladesh. The Health Minister told the Chinese envoy that the government attached high priority to health and family planning sector and primary healthcare programmes including Mother and Child Health (MCH) programme.

He thanked the Chinese government for agreeing to construct a 250-bed modern hospital at Baridhara

Weather

Dry weather likely

By Staff Correspondent

Met office Tuesday forecast that dry weather would prevail all over the country during the next 24 hours commencing from 6 am today (Wednesday).

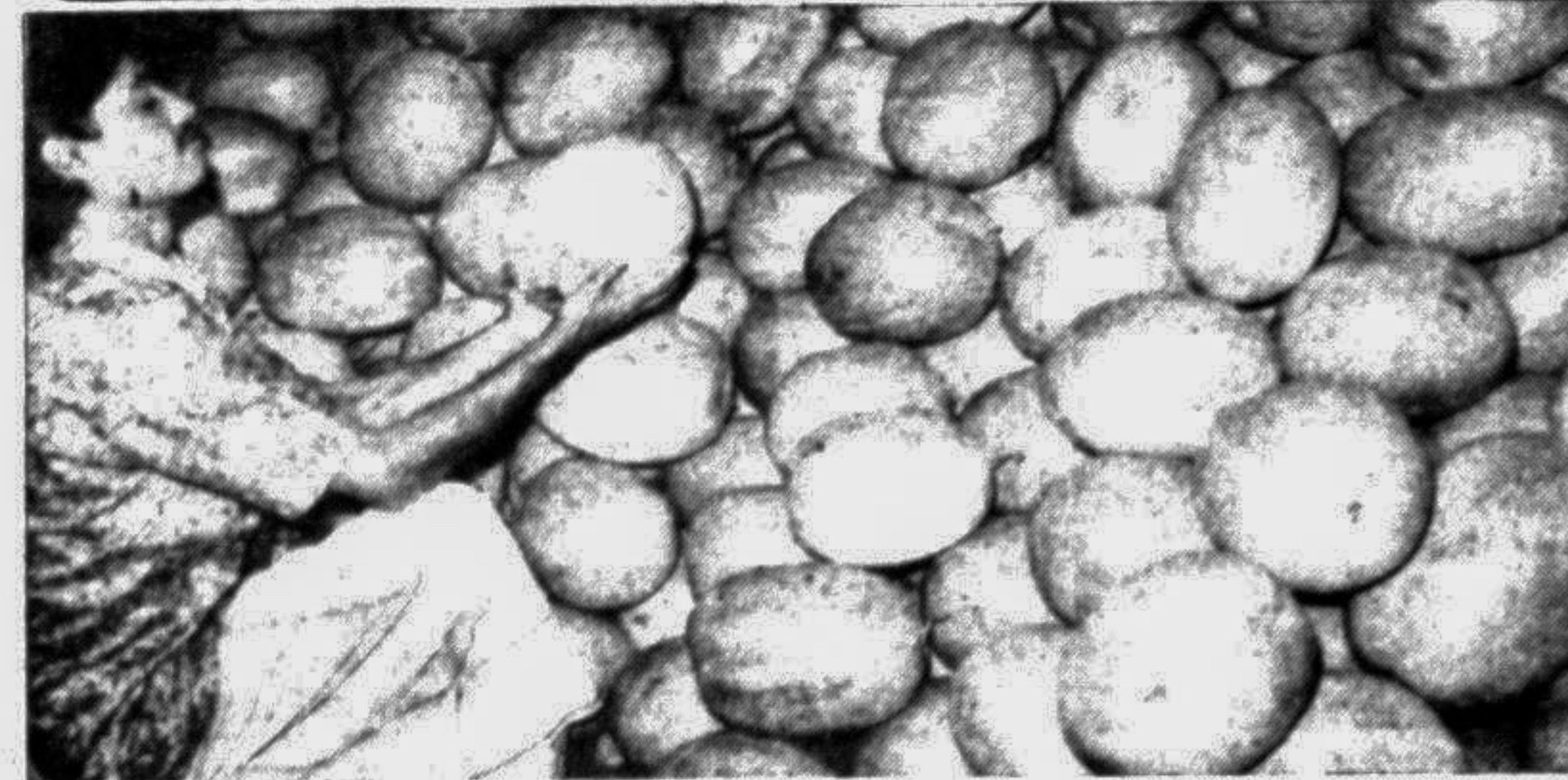
The forecast says day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius today.

The maximum temperature of 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded in Teknaf while the minimum of 12.5 degree Celsius was reported from both Rangpur and Dinajpur Tuesday.

The sun sets today at 6:02 pm and rises tomorrow (Thursday) at 6:18 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and the percentage of humidity of some major cities/ towns yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Percentage of Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	29.5	17.3	63	47
Chittagong	31.1	18.2	76	55
Rajshahi	30.0	13.5	77	50
Khulna	29.8	15.6	72	60
Barisal	31.0	16.5	74	54
Cox's Bazar	31.5	19.8	65	72
Dinajpur	27.0	12.5	72	54
Sylhet	29.6	18.0	86	61



Prices of watermelon remain out of reach of common people despite huge supply in market. —Star photo

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক

প্রধান কার্যালয় ৮৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা
ঢাকা-১০০০।
সাধারণ সেবা বিভাগ

—মুদ্রণ সংক্রান্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি—

ব্যাংকের ৩৭ শ্রেণী বিন্যাস সংক্রান্ত প্রতিবেদন ফরম কালকসহ মুদ্রণ ও সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে ঘাটনামা ও প্রতিষ্ঠিত অফসেট মুল্যদায় সমূহের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

০২। ফরম সমূহের নমুনা, ডিজাইন, শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলী সংক্রান্ত সিডিটেল বে কোন দিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে অত্র বিভাগের উপস্থিত মুদ্রণ কর্মকর্তা, ৮৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, বিকেলি (৩য় তলা), ঢাকা এর নিকট পাওয়া যাবে। সিডিটেলের মূল্য ৪০০/- (চারশত) টাকা মাত্র (অফসেটযোগ্য)। সিডিটেলের মুদ্রণের সমাপ্তিয়ার টাকার পে-অর্ডার বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংকের স্থানীয় মুদ্রণ কার্যালয়, ৮৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা হতে ব্যাংকের প্রধান কার্যালয়ের বরাবরে জরুরি করতঃ উহা উপরে বর্ণিত স্থানে অত্র মুদ্রণ সিডিটেল সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।

০৩। দরপত্র আণাধী ১৪-৩-৯৩ ইংরেজী তারিখ অপরাক ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক, ৮৩, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা ৩য় তলায় রক্ষিত টেণ্ডার বাজে গৃহীত হবে এবং ঐ দিনই অপরাক ২.১৫ ঘটিকার উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন। দরপত্র সমূহ খোলা হবে। দরপত্র বাণিজ্যের দিন কোন সিডিটেল বিক্রয় করা হবে না।

০৪। সবদিক অথবা যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই বাতিল বা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা ব্যাংকের সংরক্ষিত থাকবে।

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