

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Making assets out of urchins

By Raffat Binte Rashid

Kalam is ten years old. He sells newspapers in the busy city streets. For him, going to schools or working for a good pay is something next to impossible. His days are dull and he feels a strong rejection to continue his work, every day, under the scorching sun.

He lives in a city slum and he is the second son of his family, which consists of six members. His father's poor health prevents him from hard work and his occasional jobs allow them no luxury at all.

These urban slums where Kalam and many like him live are always underserved in terms of all basic facilities, like education and health. And these slum children are the most neglected and deprived section of our people. Most of them are engaged in physical labour to support themselves and their families.

When, one day an unknown social worker approached him with an opportunity to study and later become a skilled labourer, Kalam thought he was dreaming. The social worker is from UCEP (Under-privileged Children Educational Programmes).

The only reason for Kalam to join a UCEP school is that along with his studies he can continue with his work which is of utmost importance to him, and UCEP allows this.

UCEP was established in the post-liberation war situation of 1972 when there was an enormous increase in the number of destitute children because of large-scale migration of the rural poor families to the urban areas.

"And now UCEP is very successful and provides schooling to approximately 12,000 such working students in cities like Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna. Within 1996 we intend to go for more expansion," said Khan Mojlish, the Programme Officer of UCEP.

"The goal of UCEP is to improve the standard as social and economic life of the working children," he said.

"Every teacher in UCEP is first a social worker. Their job is to go to nearby slums or areas where such children live and motivate them, their parents, and also their neighbourhood people, to send these children to nearby UCEP schools. It is our strategy to have school units close to areas where such working children are concentrated," he said.

"The schools operate in three shifts a day, each shift giving only three lessons for a grade. A child can attend a shift convenient to him without affecting his employment so that the economic loss is not regarded by his family as a prohibitive one," he informed.

"UCEP runs two academic sessions of 135 school days in one calendar year. A child completes two grades in one year and within four years they are able to complete the eighth grade. The schools follow text books by the National Curriculum and Text Book Board, but in an abridged or condensed form."

It is the main objective of UCEP teachers to keep the attendance rate high, to keep the dropout rate as close to zero as possible. If any student is absent for three consecutive days, it

becomes the teacher's duty to find out the reason. He or she has to go to their houses or working places and try to solve the problem. These things are carefully taken care of through a chain monitoring system. At present attendance rate is 87 per cent while dropout rate in each session is 6 per cent only.

After completing the regular four years crash schooling, students are selected, according to their merit, for technical training. These trainings in UCEP are specially adapted to the market needs of skilled and semi-skilled labour. Thus training is given according to the modules of employable skills. There are two such technical schools of UCEP in Dhaka and Chittagong.

Dhaka technical school allows training to 658 such students at present. It offers courses in the following subjects: automobile, mechanics, spinning, weaving, garments, tailoring, knitting, printing, carpentry, welding, electronics, general fitting, electrical,

refrigerator and air conditioning, garments finishing and computer courses.

And in Chittagong 240 students attend electrical, machine shop and garments courses.

"Not a single student from our technical schools is unemployed. There is a 100 per cent absorption rate. We maintain special liaison with the business and commercial world. It is our main goal, that these kids do not feel frustrated that their newly earned skill is properly used."

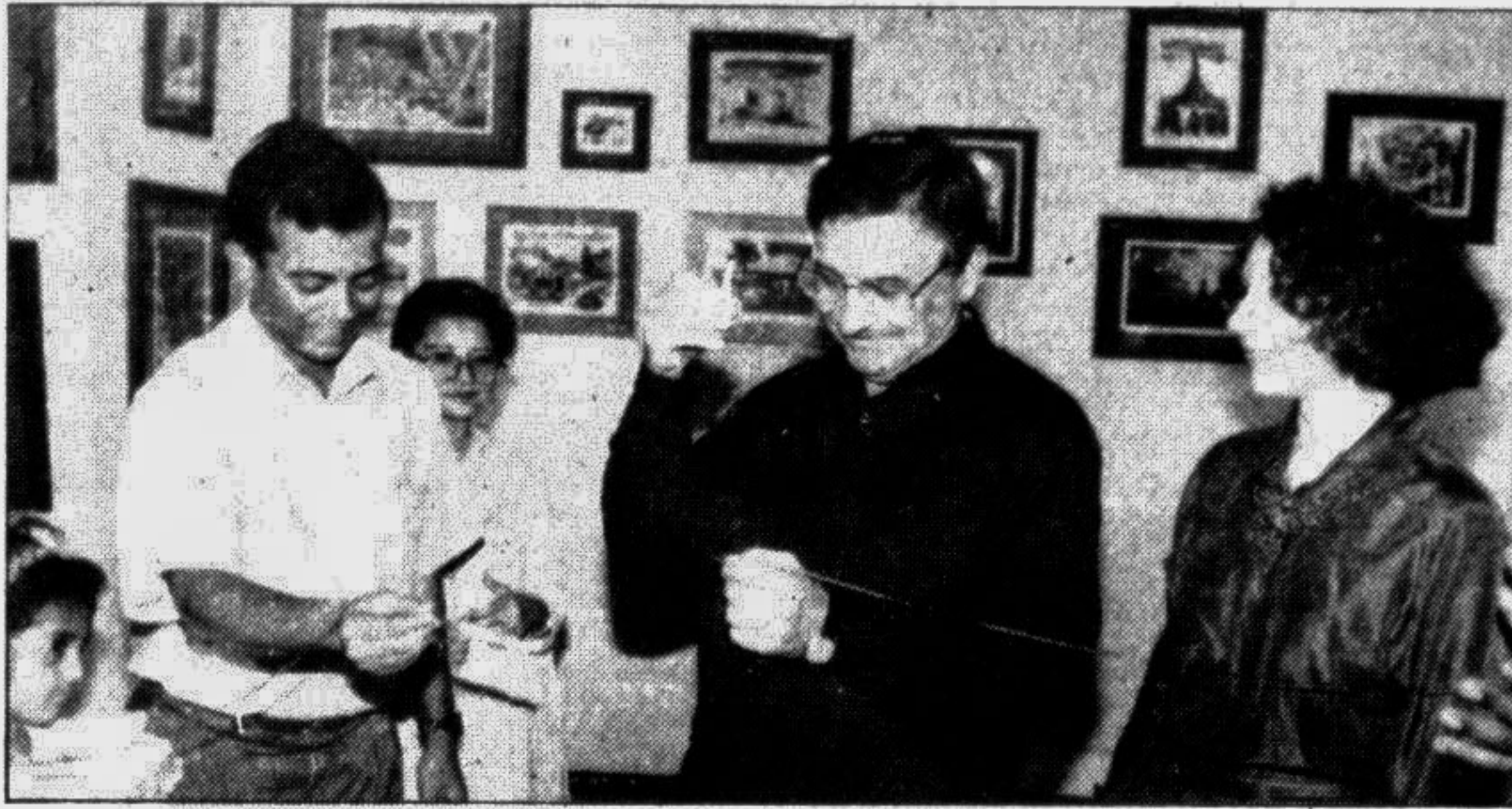
For this we have job placement officers whose duty is to maintain link with the employers. They chalk out list of possible job seekers, passed out from UCEP's general or technical schools. They go to different factories or industries or offices, with these students. Usually they are recruited on the spot, or their names are kept in the waiting lists, and are called later.

"We have an employers' day. On this day different employers are invited to the school, to see for themselves the kind of training and education they get. And of course in these orientation programmes jobs are assured. At present 25 per cent of the students from general school are employed and 95 per cent of technical schools are with stable jobs," said Khan Mojlish.

All these children are special, they are our future and for the last 20 years UCEP is working as a model as to how to teach working children. They are at their best as "child labourers" and at worst as "street urchins" and UCEP is definitely taking the best out of the best.

"Economic growth in our country is not possible without child labourers but at least let us all work to make them educated," said Khan Mojlish.

This year UCEP is celebrating its 20th year and on this occasion they need the best of cooperation from all the sections of the society.



US Ambassador William B Milam inaugurating the art exhibition by Mary Czechan Coldren at Hotel Sonargaon in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Silver jubilee of Itihas Parishad begins

# Uphold true history to give nation proper guideline

A three-day function of Bangladesh Itihas Parishad marking its silver jubilee was inaugurated here yesterday with a call for upholding true history to give the nation a proper guideline in the light of past success, failure and experience, reports BSS.

Speakers at the inaugural function paid tribute to the memory of parishad's founder and eminent historian late Professor Abu Mohamed Hlobibullah saying he and his associates had first took the initiative to study and culture history in Bengali to make the nation aware of its chronological past.

National Professor Abdur Razzaque attended the function as the chief guest while Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Professor Emajuddin Ahmad inaugurated the function.

With the Parishad Chairman Professor Sufia Ahmad in the chair, the inaugural function held at the ICMA auditorium at Nilkhet was also addressed by its General Secretary Abdul Matin Sarker, Treasurer Dr Habiba Khatun and Convenor of the Organising Committee Professor Abul Kalam Mohammad Abdul Alim.

Prof Abdur Razzaque said Prof Abu Mohamed Hlobibullah and other historian had dedicated themselves to a sacred aim of culturing history in the

mother tongue to help the future generations know the age old history of the nation.

With the same objectives, he said, Dr Muhammad Shahidullah and other contemporaries upheld the importance of Bengali language to the people which later helped the learners a lot in knowing about the mother tongue. The octogenarian academicians called upon the present researchers, teachers and learners to follow the path of those immortal persons and enrich the country's history, culture and language by their efforts for the benefits of the future generations.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmad congratulated the Parishad for awarding five historians who had documented the history of the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

"I hope Bangladesh Itihas Parishad would perform another great duty by sponsoring the compilation of the real history of Bangladesh's Independence War," he said.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmad said the proper guidelines aimed at the prosperity could only be delivered through proper knowledge in history while a nation being oblivious of its own history could be dispelled from its own identity.

"History does not merely deal with monarchs, kings or wars but it is a combined doc-

ument of the activities of whole mankind which extends through generations," he said.

The Vice-Chancellor assured of best possible cooperation from Dhaka University towards the Parishad's any future basic research project on history.

The three-day function will be featured by discussions and seminars on 22 years of country's independence, culture and literature, history, education system, film and drama, music, archaeology, economy and politics, architecture and art, philosophy and modern history and education.

## Five get Itihas Samity awards

Five prominent persons of the country yesterday received Bangladesh Itihas Samity awards at the inaugural ceremony of its silver jubilee function at the ICMA auditorium here, reports BSS.

The awards were given for their works on the history of the country's Liberation War, Parishad's general secretary Abdul Matin Sarker said while announcing their names.

The recipients are: Basanti Guha Thakurta, Maj (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam (Biruttam), Maj (ret'd) Abu Osman Chowdhury, Montu Khan and Mahboob Alam.

## Opinion survey on Mayor candidates soon

A public opinion survey will be conducted soon on possible Mayor candidates contesting the coming City Corporation election, reports UNB.

This was disclosed at a press conference by the Bangladesh Graduates Association at the Jatiya Press Club Thursday evening. It will also conduct a survey on civic problems.

Leaders of the association said the questionnaire for eliciting opinion will be prepared after discussion with different political leaders. The copies of questionnaire will be distributed later among the public.

ASM Moqtar Kabir Khan, General Secretary of the Association, said they would inform the newly elected Mayor of the civic problems and try to advise him to solve the problems through discussion on expert level.

They sought cooperation of city people to point out major problems such as mosquito menace, irregularities in clearing city garbage, black smoke of cars, parking problem, irregular power supply, communication problem and pressure of slum dwellers in

the city. On the basis of questionnaire, they will make a report and copies of the report will be sent to City Mayors, LGRD Minister, T&T and WASA and Jatiya Sangsad Speaker.

President of the association Ashraf Ali and its Vice President M Serajul Islam were present at the press conference.

## Bank rate reduced

The government has decided to reduce the bank rate from seven per cent to 6.5 per cent with effect from today, a Bangladesh Bank press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

Minimum flow rate on fixed deposits of the banks has been reduced from 6.5 per cent to six per cent.

These measures will help banks to bring down their lending rate to encourage domestic investment activity, the press release said. However, for the benefit of small investors, the interest rates on various saving instruments of the government have been kept unchanged.

## Weather

### Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Weather forecast for the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Saturday) says, rain or thunder shower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions with moderately heavy falls.

The Met office forecasts, day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius over the country.

The maximum temperature of the country recorded yesterday (Friday) of 35.4 degree Celsius was reported from Chuadanga and the minimum of 21.4 degree was reported from Srimangal.

Chief amounts of rainfall in 12 hours from 6 am to 6 pm yesterday were: Comilla-94 mm, Sylhet-42 mm and Dhaka-23 mm.

The sun sets today at 6.24 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.29 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.4	26.0	77	94
Chittagong	31.0	25.5	87	76
Rajshahi	33.9	23.3	71	77
Khulna	32.8	26.0	78	73
Barisal	32.2	25.0	85	92
Sylhet	26.5	23.3	88	91
Dinajpur	32.7	23.6	70	73

## Training course of Bangladesh Bank ends

The three-month long training course of the Bangladesh Bank Training Academy concluded here yesterday, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Khorshed Alam was the chief guest on the occasion and gave away the certificates to the successful participants.

## Education for mothers stressed

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan urged the members of the philanthropic organisations to come forward to create mass awareness among the village women about the child health and nutrition, reports BSS.

Speaking as chief guest at a seminar on 'Mother's health and nutrition' at village Gacha under Gazipur district yesterday, the minister stressed the need for education of mothers for better care of children and their health.

He laid emphasis on gearing up family planning programme for the greater interest of the country.

The seminar was also participated by parliament member Begum Selina Rahman and Prof. Rowshan Ara Rahman.

## Memorial session on Satyajit Ray begins in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 23: A two-day memorial session on celebrated film maker Satyajit Ray began at the Alliance Francaise auditorium here today, reports BSS.

Held in observance of the first death anniversary of Satyajit Ray, the memorial session was jointly organised by Chittagong Film Centre and local Alliance Francaise.

Today's memorial session included discussion and film show on life and works of Satyajit Ray.

Dr Anupom Sen presented a paper on "Satyajit Ray in the Eye of Social Science" while journalist Arun Das Gupta read out a paper on "Movement of Film Organisations and Satyajit Ray" respectively in the discussion which was chaired by Director of Alliance Francaise, Gerard Oppe.

## ECGD training course ends in Chittagong

A two-day training course on Export Credit Guarantee Scheme concluded Tuesday at the conference hall of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says a press release.

The course was organised by the Export Development Project of USAID in collaboration with the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) of Sadharan Bima Corporation. The objective of the course was to increase understanding among the bankers, exporters and custom officials.



Saturday

- 5:00 Opening announcement
- 5:00-5:15 Al-Quran Programme summary
- 5:15-5:30 News in Bangla
- 5:30-5:45 Amra Natun
- 5:45-6:00 Dibwabidilalay
- 6:00-6:15 Bichitra
- 6:15-6:30 Barshahi
- 6:30-6:45 News in Bangla
- 6:45-7:00 Mati o Manush
- 7:00-7:15 Magazine: Porichay
- 7:15-7:30 News in English
- 7:30-7:45 Drama series: Dallas
- 7:45-8:00 Khabar/The News
- 8:00-8:15 Tomorrow's programme summary
- 8:15-8:30 Closing

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1. Specification of Cheque paper: Security Cheque Paper one side Litho'd Microprinted "RUPALI BANK LTD" in English Script with Water Fugitive Ink, in pink colour, with the Bank's Approved design Watermark in Bengali Script.
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12. Tender will be opened at 3:00 P. M. on 17th May, 1993 in presence of tenderers if any, in the aforesaid Division of the Bank.
13. The Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason what soever.

**M. I. CHOUDHURY**  
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER