

Dhaka Day by Day

Snails and the Little Girls

by Parveen Anam

They are there every day — two little girls called Rahima and Halima. They can't be more than six and eight years old. They carry a small, discarded tin of paint, probably collected from an 'under-construction' mansion. Their principal concern, while Dhaka sleeps, is to collect snails for their ducks back home. Ducks love snails

and the little tin serves their purpose perfectly. They are too small, these two sisters, to carry a full tin by themselves, so they hold it on two sides and giggling and slipping in the mud, happily catch the snails to fill up the tin.

Life is kind to them, yet. They are dressed in little more than a half-torn undergarment. They do not know that dresses are to be bought for fantastic sums in the city stores. Sums which they cannot expect to earn or see in a lifetime. Or their children's lifetime. As long as their little ducks and ducklings are well fed and happy, they are happy. And happiness cannot be bought from city stores or anywhere else.

It never occurs to these tots, that the 'supreme beings' in power, are expounding well-beaten theories of universal education and equally well propounded theories of 'poultry farming' and how the government is encouraging it and making available 'poultry feed' at 'rock-bottom' prices, for the 'keepers' of poultry at home. We the simple souls, think in bleak moments, when we see girls that size, getting soaked in the rain, with smiles that would bring traffic to a screeching halt what those theories

and 'poultry feed' are meant for. Those two little girls are supposed to be in school at that hour, learning their three R's, or so the authorities will have us believe.

But they are collecting food for their ducks, who will lay eggs, which the mother can sell in the market to feed their family of eight. Family

planning is apparently being theorized on the television sets only. It amuses us to think of the hollow claims made so effortlessly by the 'elected representatives of their people' on the education front and other fronts.

Universal education is the theme of the day, of course, with the very candidates for such education, prowling around in knee-deep water, catching snails for their 'home poultry'! If it was not so sad, it would actually be quite funny. Perhaps that's what they want, the authorities. Make us all have a good laugh. At the donor's expense. The donors for such fantastic projects are again blissfully unaware of the little girls who are supposedly at school being tutored and educated, while their money is all being siphoned

away on other more important things. Its quite a ludicrous situation, actually. Only for those who bother to see the humour and the irony of it. But then, it would never do to become cynical, for was it not Oscar Wilde who so wisely said, 'A cynic is one, who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing?' And that would never do, would it? Little girls or no little girls.



90 pc cured drug-abusers relapse for lack of follow-up

By Shamsad Mortuza

Nearly 90 per cent of the drug addicts treated at the Central Drug Addiction Treatment Centre in Dhaka went back to the habit in the post treatment period due to lack of adequate follow-up.

This was told by the Chief Consultant of the centre, Dr Syed Kamaluddin at a recent seminar. The hospital, however, has a record of 332 cases of relapse among the 4328 treated patients in the first four years since establishment.

"The fact is we do not have the necessary manpower to monitor each and every patient treated here," one physician at the hospital said adding, "The drug dependents need medication, counselling and rehabilitation programmes during the post treatment period."

Only Ahsania Mission, an NGO, has been working for rehabilitating the psychotropic drug abusers treated in the country's only government owned hospital of its kind.

Presently, the hospital has the accommodation for 40 patients with a maximum duration of stay of four weeks for the detoxification process.

The patients are detoxified with control doses of other psychotropic drugs. "Four weeks

are absolutely inadequate for the drug dependents who have been used to taking psychotropic substances for years," the doctor said.

The innate cravings for drugs in addition to the peer pressure coupled with frustration in life forced the recovering addicts to go back to taking drugs, the doctor pointed out.

"Most of the other countries are presently underlining after-care, motivation and drug abuse prevention programmes," one highly placed official at the Narcotics Control Department said.

"Sadly enough, our government is only concerned with the amount of drug seized and number of cases filed," the official regretted.

"Even our neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and India have launched massive after-care and rehabilitation programmes for the recovering addicts," he said.

The addiction treatment hospital has the necessary land and scope to initiate poultry, nursery or handicrafts manufacturing projects to rehabilitate the addicts who want to go back to normal life, he added.

According to official reckoning, there are about eight lakh drug dependents in the country.



Members of Inner Wheel Clubs of Bangladesh held a 'Rally of Commitment' at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. Professor Jahanara Begum, State Minister for Cultural Affairs graced the occasion as chief guest while Dilruba Ahmed IIWR was present as special guest. The meeting was presided over by Munira Khan, District Chairman (second from left) also seen in the picture (from L to R), Dilruba Ahmed, Towfika Aftab and Rahima Asafjah District Secretary.

Muktijoddha Sangsad body approved

Chairman of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad Principal Ahad Chowdhury recently approved the convening committee of the organisation's Khulna district unit.

The 11-member committee was recently formed with the noted freedom fighter of Khulna, Sheikh Abdus Sattar as its convenor.

Other executives elected are: Mollah Nurul Haq (joint convenor), Md Abdus Sattar (joint convenor) and members — AKM Mansur Ahmed, Sheikh Monirul Islam.



মৃত্যু বার্ষিকী

সাত ২৫ শে সেপ্টেম্বর
বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তিবর্গ ও গণতন্ত্র
কোম্পানীর প্রতিষ্ঠাতা
পরিচালক মরহুম জনাব
আবদুল মতিন এর প্রথম
মৃত্যু বার্ষিকী। এদিনে আমরা তাঁকে প্রদক্ষা
ভরে স্মরণ করছি ও তাঁর বিদেহী আত্মার
মাগফেরাত কামনায় সকলের দোয়া প্রার্থী।

মরহুম এর
স্ত্রী, পুত্র ও কন্যাগণ

Govt firm to protect interests of labourers: Noman

CHITTAGONG, Sept 24: Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah-al Noman today said that the government is firmly committed to safeguarding the interest of the labourers working in different mills and factories in the country, reports BSS.

He was addressing as chief guest at divisional representatives conference of the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal at Waztullah Institute Hall here.

Presided over by the president of Chittagong divisional Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal A A M Nazimuddin, the function was addressed, among others, by Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Ashraf Hossain Khan, Sirajul Islam MP, BNP leader advocate Badrul Anwar, Golam Akbar Khandakar and general secretary of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal Nazrul Islam Khan.

The Fisheries Minister said the government was taken various

steps to consolidate national economy in accordance with the recent change in world economy towards free market economy. He said the government is trying hard to find out ways and means to protect the interest of the labour force which is vital for the development of our national economy. He called upon the workers to contribute their best to the policy of 'politics of production' pursued by the government.

Weather

Temperature may rise

By Staff Correspondent

The overall weather will remain nearly unchanged today. The sky in the country's coastal regions will be cloudy and partly cloudy elsewhere, forecast the Meteorological department.

Temporary light rain or thundershowers is likely to occur all over the country's five divisions — Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal.

Today's temperature may rise by one to two degrees Celsius all over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature in the country 33 degrees Celsius was in Comilla and Bogra while the lowest 22.5 degrees Celsius was reported from Rangamati.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 5.52 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 5.48 am.

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1. A competitor cannot enter more than once, in one month.
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