

Dhaka Day by Day

Banking on Skills

by Raffat Binte Rashid

There are so many banks and organizations all over the world, offering so many modern facilities, new opportunities; yet a skill bank or a service bank which offers only professional and expert help or view, is definitely something new.

Even though International Executive Service Corps (IESC) was first established in May 1964, this different American venture has taken its roots, only recently, in Bangladesh.

Many former vice presidents or senior executives of well reputed international firms or banks or organizations, feel that they still have more to offer even after retirement. It is only then they registered voluntarily with IESC — the skill bank in other words.

"IESC's services through USAID was first started in Bangladesh in 1989", says CM. Murshed, Country Director IESC Bangladesh. "In fact the first agreement, a four-year plan was signed then, but the unfortunate death of my predecessor and the Gulf War delayed the project a bit and it got started around October 1990," he explains.

"To any Third World countries or developing countries, we offer our assistance," says W. James Bell Vice President, Asia IESC.

Explaining Bell says that the urge to do more or give more is actually their driving force. "After working for 25 or 30 years in one field, you definitely become an expert on the matter," he feels.

"Then after you go into retirement, what good is that skill to you unless you help others with your experience," Bell continues.

"These people are actually volunteers, they offer you their services free of cost, only their plane fare and lodging charges in whatever country they go to, are taken care of, by the client they will work for," Murshed explains.

"Hiring a vice president of some international firm for your industry is not a matter of joke, and cannot be thought in terms of dollars or taka to be precise", he continues. "Their assistance to you is of great help no

doubt. For example Apex Footwear plant had the capacity of 1,000 pairs per day but it was producing only 400 pairs with many going rejected. But when they asked for IESC's assistance their production to the day the volunteer left was 1162 a day, a tremendous success no doubt," says Murshed happily.

"So far there are already 29 projects in Bangladesh under such supervision. USAID is quite content with such industrial promotion

going on in Bangladesh and I myself strongly feel good about the reaction seen and received here."

Industries or organization which are at loss for unknown reasons approach the country office here at the Chamber's Building Motijheel, Dhaka. They register and list down their requirement which are then scanned by the Country Director. "If the project looks feasible, we send the request to our head quarters in Stamford, Connecticut. They in turn match the requirements in the skill bank where the information of volunteers is available.

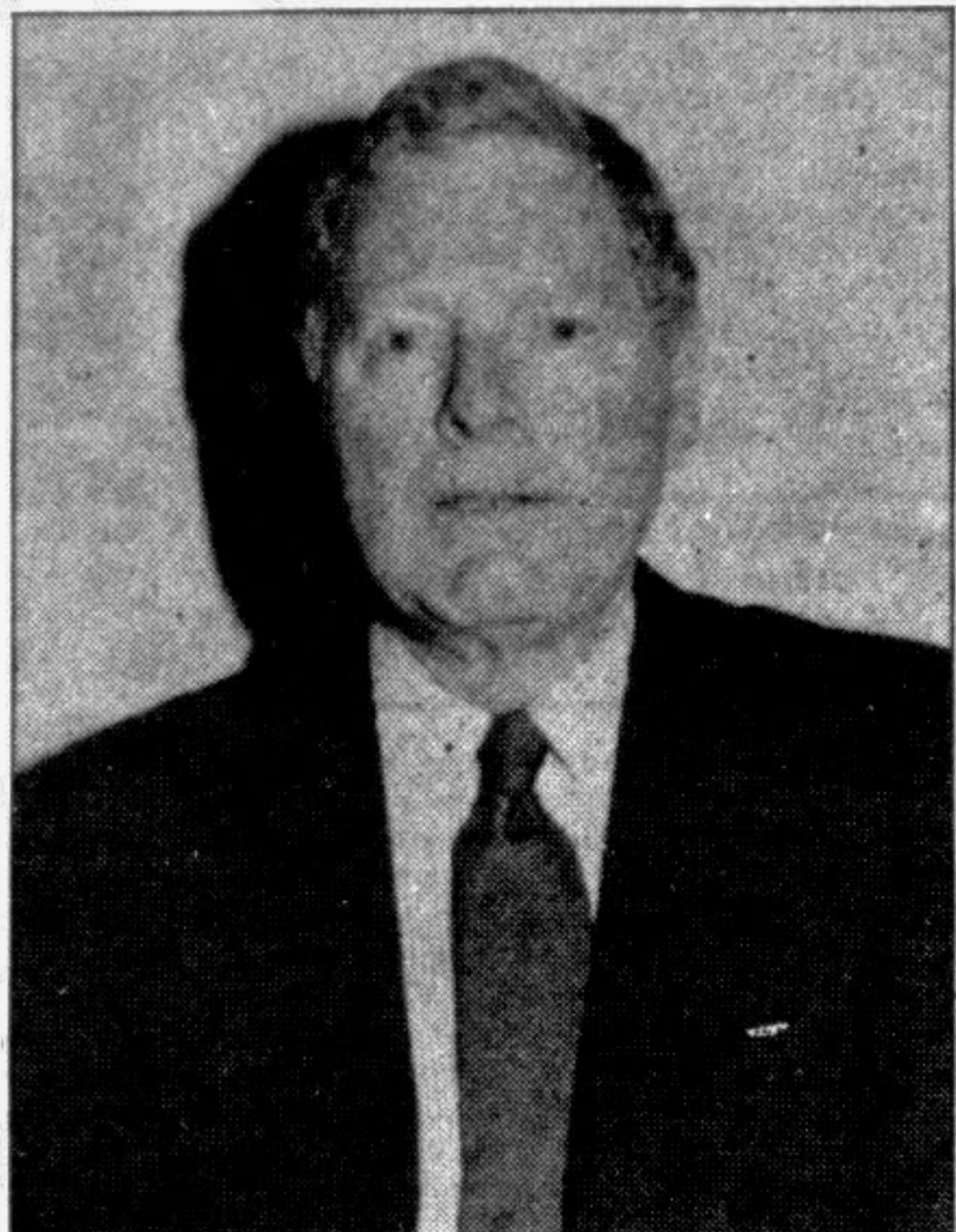
"They send us few suggested names which the party here chose and ultimately pick, nearest to their need, we impose nothing on them," explains Murshed.

"This sort of venture and aid not only help the country economically but allow the industrial sector to pick up that is wanted so badly," CM Murshed strongly believes.

The projects in Bangladesh are so far very successful and we hope to continue in the future," James Bell feels.

"Bangladesh is a very colourful country, from what I have seen, the rickshaws, the busy Motijheel area, I like it very much and the people are good too, we definitely hope to work together more."

This year IESC is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Working all over the world with more than 13,000 volunteers, this skill bank hopes to help the world more and make it a better place.



W. James Bell, Vice President, Asia.



Canada's Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific Raymond Chan called on Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman at his office yesterday. — Star photo

Shamsul Islam tells JS

Unpaid phone bills amount to Tk30.19cr

Unpaid telephone bills for the first seven months of the current fiscal year amounted to over Tk 30.19 crore, Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam informed the House yesterday, reports UNB.

Of the unrealised amount, autonomous and semi-government organisations owe about Tk 16 crore while news agencies and newspapers Tk 2.60 crore, said Islam, in absence of Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam. He was replying to a supplementary question from Begum Rowshanara Hena of BNP.

Earlier, in reply to a written question from Md Aminul Islam (AL), the minister said during the period telephone department realised over Tk 270.60 crore from subscribers, Tk 14.14 crore up from that of the corresponding period of last fiscal.

Responding to another supplementary, Islam said the government realised Tk 279.49 crore in 1988-89 as telephone bills while it was Tk 281 in 1989-90, Tk 431 in 1990-91, Tk 452 in 1991-92 and Tk 524 in 1992-93.

To a written question of A K M Jahangir Hossain (AL), he said the government had no plan to set VHF (Very High Frequency) wireless set/PCO in the current fiscal year but taken measures to install 64 PCO or telephones through range of UHF (Ultra High Frequency) bases in Dhaka, Chittagong and Moulvibazar.

Besides, the minister said, tender has been floated for installation of wireless multi-access UHF system in Bhoja, Barguna and Patuakhali with a French grant.

Replying to another question which stood in the name of Sharaf Uddin Khasru (AL), Islam said cord phones were installed in 12 thanas of the country. The thanas are Sharsa, Mongla, Shibpur, Kaliganj, Baralekha, Savar, Chakoria, Sreemangal, Kapasia, Jinzira (Kaliganj), Shaikupa and Noapara (Avaynagar).

Replying to another question from Abdul Awal Mia (AL), the Finance Minister said import duty on writing, printing and offset papers were 60 per cent in 1992-93, which, he said, was still in effect in the current fiscal.

Rahman said at present there is no sales tax on these items as VAT has been

introduced from July 1, 1991 by repealing the Sales Tax Ordinance. A 15 per cent VAT has remained enforce since June 18, 1992.

Before fixing of duty and tax in 1991-92 fiscal, 75 per cent duty and 15 VAT were collected. Twenty per cent sales tax was imposed on the items before the introduction of VAT in July 1, 1991.

No legal basis to reinstate bank employees'

There is no legal basis to reinstate the bank employees who lost their jobs about 11 years ago in 1982, State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman told the House yesterday.

Replying to a question which stood in the name of Md Abdul Awal Mia (AL), the State Minister said the Agrani Bank management have reinstated only one employee. Some 193 bank employees lost their jobs in 1982.

The minister said as per rules an employee can apply for reinstatement within a month termination or punishment. Accordingly, the authorities had finalised the applications of reinstatement submitted in due time.

24,699 certificate cases filed in last fiscal

A total of 24,699 certificate cases were lodged against the farmers during 1992-93 fiscal year to realise agriculture loan, State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman informed the parliament yesterday.

Replying to a written question from Haji Rashed Mosharrar (AL), the minister said some 15,391 certificate cases were filed in 1991-92 fiscal.

BDRCS lottery draw tomorrow

The draw of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) lottery-93 will be held at 10 am in the BA Siddiky Auditorium of the Nursing School attached to the Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital at Eskaton, reports BSS.

A four-member committee headed by Justice Abdur Rouf, Chief Election Commissioner, will conduct the draw. The Chairman of the BDRCS Syed Shahidul Haque Jamal, MP and members of the Managing Board of the BDRCS are likely to attend the draw.

38 Bangladeshi children get Shankar Int'l Award

Thirty-eight Bangladeshi child painters and writers were given the Shankar's International Children's Competition 1993 Award at a prize distribution ceremony in New Delhi on Friday, according to a message received here yesterday, reports BSS.

The recipients included the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Gold medalist Khandoker Mehruz Alam.

Indian Vice President KR Narayanan distributed the awards at the function conducted by the children themselves. Khandoker Mehruz Alam received his own prize while Minister (Press) of Bangladesh High Commission receive the awards on behalf of the 37 other Bangladeshi winners. Alam had earlier received a silver medal in the Shankar's competition. He has so far got 53 awards from different national and international competitions.

Aug Chin Yaw of Malaysia got the President of India's Gold Medal. Besides Alam, 16 others from different countries were awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Gold Medal.

A total of 160,000 paintings and writings from 100 countries were sent to the competition of which 1000 were awarded.

SAARC Literary Forum soon

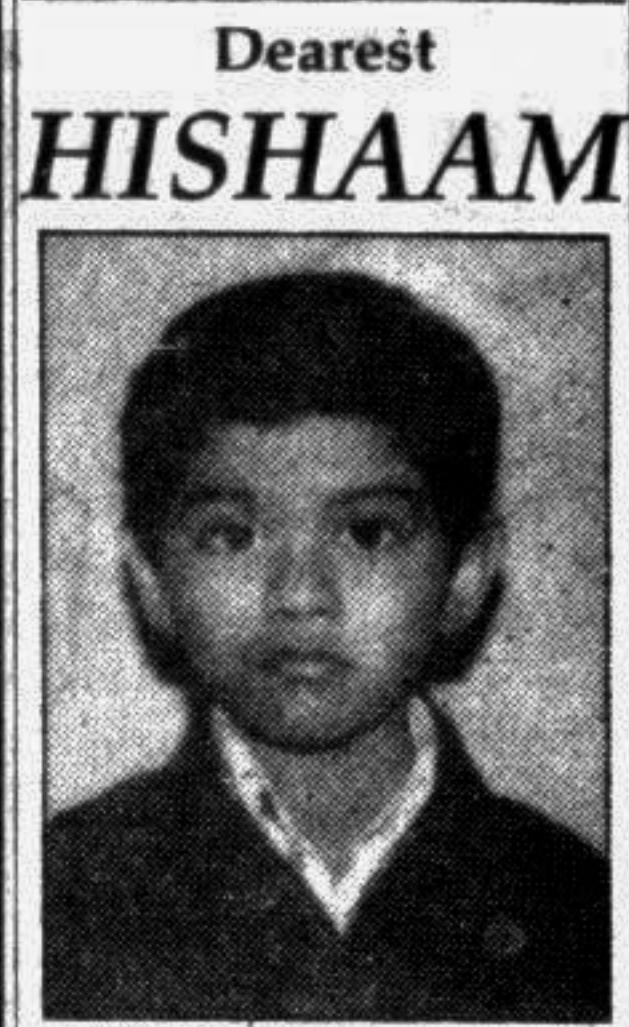
Preparations are complete for floating a literary organisation called SAARC Literary Forum with the objective of developing literature and promoting goodwill and cooperation among poets and litterateurs of the countries of South Asia, reports BSS.

A preparatory meeting was held recently with Dr Mazharul Islam in the chair. Asad Choudhury, Rafiq Azad, Zakaria Shirazi, Aminul Islam Bedu, Abid Azad, Ruby Rahman, Dilara Hafiz, Rezauddin Stalin attended the meeting.

The meeting decided to form a full-fledged committee after Eid-ul-Fitr to launch the activities of the forum.

Leading litterateurs including Zillur Rahman Siddiqui have extended their support.

Happy Birthday



Choto Apu, Baro Apu, Ammu & Abbu

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Siddique Memorial Trust fund introduced at DU

The Abdus Siddique Memorial Trust a new trust fund, was formally introduced at the Dhaka University Sunday, reports UNB.

The fund will provide scholarship of Tk 500 per month for a year to two meritorious students of Law Department of the university.

The recipients will be the highest marks holder in Honours final examination and a first year honours class student on the basis of HSC result.

On the occasion a cheque of Tk two lakh was handed over by sons of late Abdus Siddique — Serajul Islam and Zahurul Islam, to DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Emazuddin Ahmed at his office.

Abdus Siddique, former Assistant Secretary of the then Dhaka District Muslim Association was closely associated with the establishment of Dhaka University. He was also a member of Dhaka University Court since the inception of the university in 1921. Siddique died in 1945 at the age of 56.

The function was attended, among others, by Pro-VC Prof Wakil Ahmed, Law Faculty Dean Dr Ershadul Bari and Chairman of Law Department Dr MI Patwari.

BTTB's reaction to city phone report

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) in a reaction to a story published in The Daily Star March 3 has contended that demand notes are being issued where there are cable networks available.

The BTTB said 26000 digital telephone connections were given in 1990 mostly from existing cable pairs and the network came subsequently and as such availability of cable pairs for 18500 lines is not a problem.

At present about 42524 spare pairs are available of which 15962 are good. BTTB added it further added that 2000 pairs each have been laid in central, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and Gulshan exchange while laying of another 2000 pairs is underway.

The chairman of the BTTB had said the maintenance work programme has been prepared within available budget resource and as a result the implementation of a balance maintenance programme has been possible.

Our correspondent replies: The BTTB is supposed to take feasibility report from ex-

changes regarding availability of cable pairs before issuing demand notes. But this correspondent has come to know that the procedure had not been followed in issuance of notes where pairs are not available as was revealed in field trips to different exchanges.

Some divisions have also informed the BTTB authorities about the cable pair crisis. In some parts of the city, some lines are lying dead for a long-time while new connections are being made. How is this possible? It is possible by disconnecting the old line and connecting the cable to the new line. This was also confirmed to this correspondent by BTTB insiders.

When 26000 lines were introduced in 1990, the existing pair inventory came under tremendous pressure. As the subsequent network came, much of it were used for replacing old and damaged pairs. Also the number of pairs available on the 1:1, 5:1.5 basis were not sufficient. For example, the connection box in front of Jinjira Hotel, Green Road had received only 50 pairs while the demand had been much higher. Shaorapara, Satmasjid Road, Rayer Bazar, and Kairul are only some of the places where in short of supply of pairs.

The BTTB has said there are 15962 good pairs now, but it has not mentioned the allocation of cables to different divisions and subdivisions.

Therefore, the problem of pair availability remains.

New pairs have been laid this statement is not totally correct. In Sher-e-Bangla, for instance, the laying is still going on. Moreover, out of four sections of the exchange, only one section will be covered with new pairs and the rest of the three will go uncovered.

These pairs are primary pairs as reported by officials in sub-division office (SDO) and no secondary pairs are laid without which the scheme will be back to the square one again.

The crisis of pairs availability can be understood in one single incident that happened yesterday at the SDO's office at Dhanmondi-19. The officer in charge was manhandled by a mob when he expressed his inability to give connection due to lack of pairs. A police case was also filed on the incident.

Weather

Dry weather likely

By Staff Correspondent

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country during the next 24 hours commencing from 6:00 pm yesterday (Monday), the Met Office forecasts.

Day temperature will remain nearly unchanged during the period across the country, it adds.

The highest temperature of the country yesterday of 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded at Sathkira and the lowest of 11.9 degrees Celsius was recorded at Rangpur.

The sun sets today (Tuesday) at 6:05 pm and rises tomorrow (Wednesday) at 6:14 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded at some important cities and towns of the country recorded yesterday are as follows:

Cities /Towns	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	31.5	23.2	77	44
Chittagong	29.8	21.0	75	83
Rajshahi	31.7	15.2	45	41
Khulna	33.0	21.6	82	62
Barisal	31.6	22.6	85	60
Cox's Bazar	29.5	20.6	77	83
Sylhet	31.4	18.8	86	47
Dinajpur	29.8	13.0	60	45

COORDINATOR—In-Country Orientation Program

An International Executing Agency is seeking a Coordinator for the In-Country Orientation Program located in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This program provides professional services to expatriate and Bangladeshi counterparts using specific techniques to facilitate and understanding of cultural issues that have impact upon the responsibilities they must complete on their various assignments in Bangladesh. Specific training techniques include educational sessions on cultural issues in the work environment, orientation programs, language training and publication of newsletters.

The successful candidate will be responsible for implementing the program and conducting training on various topics relevant to the work environment to ensure the effective work performance of expatriate advisors and their counterparts in Bangladesh. We are seeking a creative self-starter who can manage and develop a strong and dynamic program with a minimum of guidance and supervision. Applicants are expected to have the following qualifications and experience in order to be considered for the position:

- work experience and qualifications in education illustrating the ability to transfer ideas to adults
- familiarity with cultural issues
- hold a graduate degree in political science, international studies or social sciences
- excellent communication skills including total fluency in English and Bangla
- experience living in a western country and computer literacy would be preferred

Salary will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. If you meet the above requirements and are interested in this full-time contract position, please submit your application with a handwritten covering letter including two references by 24th March, 1994 to:

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