Dhaka Day by Day

Charms of Video Games

by Sharier Khan

Ten years old Jamal earns five taka everyday by helping his brother sell chicken at the Mirpur Section One bazar. Jamal spends the whole amount of money for entertainment. Once, he was a cinema-nut. Then, he used to hire old bicycles for a whole day just for fun. Recently, he has become addicted to TV games.

At around 1 pm everyday, you will find Jamal at a TV games shop at Sony Cinema Hall Market. He likes to play "commando". "I can make over 50,000 points in one go, nobody beats me,' he proudly claims.

For three taka, the shopowner lets one play a game for once. Good players last for twenty minutes. The novice loses the game within a minute.

In the shop, one will always notice a crowd of poor slum boys trying to get his chance to play "commando" which is full of killing enemies with machine and laser guns. Most of the slum children "somehow" manage the money to play games — apparently three taka is not a big amount — but a boy like Jamal spends about Tk 150 every month.

"No, I never used to spend Tk 150 a month before," Jamal said thoughtfully, "but now I do. But this game is superb!"

TV games are supposed to be limited within well-off families. Five or six years ago, TV game shops started coming up in an increasing number.

As TV game devices became available in the markets, well-off people started buying the devices for their children as those were reasonably cheap. Many of the shops closed down, according to Abul Hossain, who once owned two TV games shops in Rayer Bazar.

"But there are different reasons too. The well-off kids became addicted to the games and many started stealing money from their fathers' pockets. And one day angry fathers of Rayer Bazar came to me and warned me to close down the shops," Abul Hossain said.

"I did not close down the shop. So next time, men came and started breaking things. I apologized and closed one of the two shops," Abul Hossain recalled.

"I used to earn a good amount everyday. But I know this business spoils kids. For instance, I knew a boy who stole Tk 500 just to play the game. The kid's father came to my shop and caught him red-handed," he added.

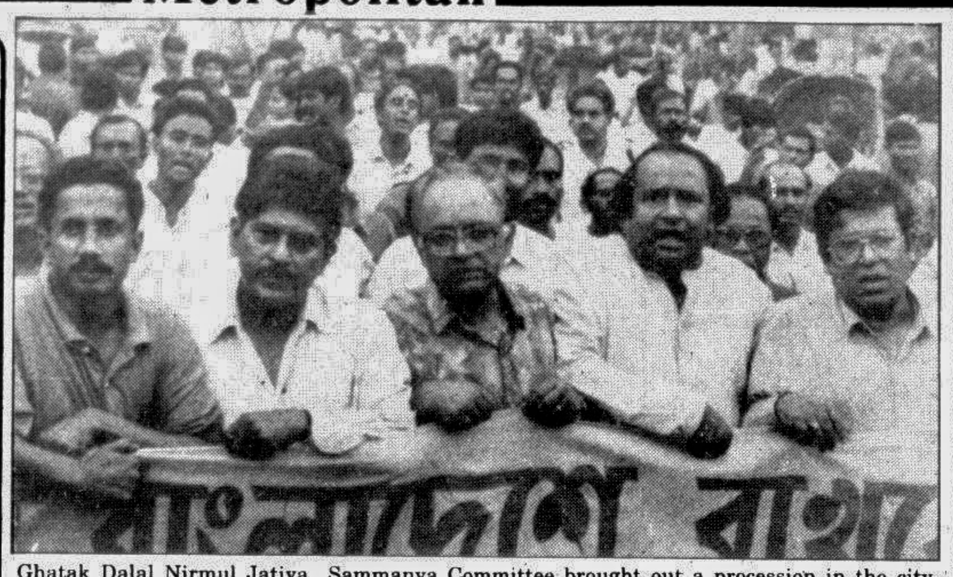
Now few shops are running the show in the city, mostly in densely populated areas where live a huge number of poor children whose fathers are not aware of the irresistible influence of the game.

"There is nothing ethically wrong with these shops," says a well-off teen-ager who occasionally plays "space wars" games wherever he gets a chance. The problem, of course, is, most of the children can not afford to play such games up to the level of their satisfaction. So they pinch money from their parents, or in case of working children, they spend their whole income.

One father of such a TV game addict kid says, "Well, I can not give my son a play ground and I believe no kid should stay home all day long. I think I cannot stop my kid from playing TV games. So I give him some money everyday."

But poor parents can not naturally afford entertainment for their kids. Their kids must earn their own money in order to buy cheap thrills.

Jamal has definitely developed a fantasy world by playing computerised games. Perhaps such an imaginary world will not help him fight the harsh reality in any way, but then again, should he be deprived of the world of imagination just because he is poor?



Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Sammanya Committee brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the attack of Jamaat-Shibir activists on its workers at Satkhira Wednesday. — Star photo

REB sets up 3700 km power lines so far

The 24th meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources was held yesterday at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Chairman, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain was in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting discussed the overall activities of the country's rural electrification programmes. The meeting was told that Rural Electrification Board (REB) had so far constructed over 3700 kilometres (km) distribution power lines and provided electricity facilities to a total of over 82000 consumers till February last against the target of 5800 kilometres of distribution lines and one lakh ten thousand consumers.

Over 12 thousand and five hundred villages of 278 thanas have so far been brought under rural electrification network. A total of over eight lakh and 53 thousand rural consumers of different categories have so far been provided with rural electricity facilities.

The meeting expressed satisfaction on the overall progress of rural electrification programmes and stressed the need for mobilising necessary foreign and domestic fund to accelerate the future rural electrification programmes of the country.

Members of the committee Azizul Hoque and Shahiduzaman Beltu of the BNP and Abdul Mukit Khan and Sharaffuddin Khashu of the Jatiya Party attended the meeting.

Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral resources Jamal Hossain, Chairman of REB Brig Enamul Hoque, Chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) M Fazlul Hoq, Chairman of DESA Amanul Islam Chowdhury, Acting Chairman of Petro-Bangla Mosharraf Hossain and Managing Director in Charge of Titas Gas Muktadir Ali were also present.

Yeltsin greets Biswas

Russian President Boris Yeltsin felicitated President Abdur Rahman Biswas on the occasion of Independence and National Day of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

In a message, the Russian President expressed the confidence that the relations between the two countries would steadily develop to their mutual benefit and in the interest of universal security and stability.

He wished every success of Bangladesh in her endeavour for national development.

President of Armenia Levon Ten-Pterssian, Grand Duke of Lexembourge Jean, King of Sweden Carl Gustaf, FAO Representative Peter Myers and USESCO Director General Dr Abdul Aziz Othman Alwaijri also sent similar messages on the occasion.

Programmes to celebrate Rabindra, Nazrul jayanti at nat'l level

The government has planned an elaborate programmes to celebrate the Rabindra-Nazrul jayanti at national level this year, reports BSS.

The programmes were taken at a meeting held in this connection at the conference room of the Cultural Ministry. State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan Ara Begum presided.

The meeting was informed that a three-day programme would be inaugurated centrally in Dhaka. The birth anniversaries will be held at the memorial places of Nazrul Islam at Darirampur of Mymensingh and Comilla and memorial places of Rabindranath at Shilaidah of Kushtia, Patisar of Noagaon and Shahjadpur of Siranganj under government assistance.

Cultural functions, discussions and seminars, fairs and art exhibitions will be arranged to celebrate their birth anniversaries.

The meeting formed a coordination committee with the State Minister for Cultural Affairs as patron, ministers, state ministers, Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation and members of parliament of concerned areas as advisers and the Cultural Secretary as chairperson. The meeting has also formed eleven sub-committees for the purpose.

Seminar on peptic ulcer in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Mar 31: Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah-al-Noman today laid emphasis on updating knowledge in medical science by following the latest research in the world in this field, reports BSS.

He was addressing as chief guest a symposium organised by the Bangladesh Gastroenterology Society in collaboration with renowned pharmaceutical co Ciba-Geigy at a local hotel here.

Presided over by the general secretary of the Bangladesh Gastroenterology Society Prof Mahmud Hasan, the function was addressed, among others, by Dr Asma Raihan, noted doctor and head of Gastroenterology Department of Sir J J Hospital and Grant Medical College of Bombay and Prof Sharad C Shah.

The Fisheries Minister said, the people of developing countries like ours were acutely suffering from liver diseases and the poor rural were not in a position to undergo proper treatment.

Sandhani member honoured

Dr Ashok Kumar Roy, one of the organisers of voluntary blood donation and posthumous eye donation movements in Bangladesh, has been given the membership of International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) Manchester, UK for his significant contribution to the country's blood donation movement, reports BSS.

Dr Ahsok Kumar is the first member of Sandhani to get this membership.

Newsmen form alliance body

By Staff Correspondent

An alliance committee was formed recently to ensure working atmosphere of journalists with Mahfuzul Haq Khan as president and Nazrul Islam as general secretary.

The body was formed Tuesday at a meeting of journalists with senior journalist Alauddin Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting expressed its concern over the professional problems faced by the journalists. The meeting called upon all the journalists to unite against illegal retrenchment, non-payment of salaries, allowances and gratuity under Wage Board and reopening of all closed newspapers.

The meeting lauded the direct voting system of BFUJ and praised 36 journalists for masterminding the novel election system.

The other members of the newly formed committee are: Alauddin Ahmed - vice president, Mosharraf Hossain Khan - assistant general secretary, Syed Yamin Bakht - organising secretary, Abul Hossain - office secretary, Paresh Chandra Shah — treasurer, Abdul Khaleq Khan, Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Kazi Enamul Rashid, Nazibul Bashar Sohel — members.

Brindatsav begins today

By Staff Correspondent

A three-day cultural festival Brindatsav begins at the British Council auditorium this evening.

Firoza Begum will inaugurate the three-day programme.

On the inaugural day Nilufar Yasmin will be accorded reception.

Shamsur Rahman, Mamtajuddin Ahmed, Mustafa Monowar, Devu Bhattyacharya will also attend the inaugural session.

Jishu's first solo painting show opens today

By Staff Correspondent

The first solo exhibition of paintings by Jishu Tarafder opens at the Jojon, Contemporary Art Gallery in the city today.

Noted artist Mustafa Manwar will inaugurate the 8-day show at 6:30 pm.

In all 18 works — all in oil on canvas will be on display.

The exhibition will continue till April 8 and remain open everyday from 3-8 pm.

Jishu, a self-taught artist, was born in September 1964 in Dhunat, Bogra.

Trust for rehabilitation of mentally retarded

A trust for rehabilitation of the mentally retarded has been launched by the Society for the Care and Education of Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh (SCEMRB), reports BSS.

The trust to be known as 'Bangladesh Manashik Pratibandhi Kalyan Trust' was registered (Wednesday) at the sub-registrar's office here by the SCEMRB acting as the settler with a donation of Taka one lakh.

Hanif accorded reception

Mayor of Dhaka City Mohammad Hanif yesterday called upon the people to work hard to bring about economic emancipation of the nation, reports BSS.

"Although we have achieved independence, our goals to attain economic self-reliance have remained unfulfilled," he added.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a grand reception organised in his honour by Narayanganj city unit of Awami League at Chashara victory stand for being elected as the Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation.

Presided over by Prof Nazma Rahman, president of Narayanganj city unit of Awami League, the reception was also addressed, among others, by Shamim Osman, general secretary of Narayanganj city Awami League, Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, Vice president, Narayanganj District Awami League and Abul Hasnat, president Sonargaon thana Awami League.

Basanta Mela begins in Khulna

KHULNA, Mar 31: A week-long *Basanta Mela* began here at Khulna Zila School ground today under the auspices of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), reports BSS.

The mela has been organised to assemble rural artisans of handicrafts and exhibit their products with a view to popularising and patronising cottage industry.

The mela was formally inaugurated by Khulna City Corporation mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman.

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner Kazi Reazul Haque, the inaugural function was addressed, among others, by Divisional Commissioner Abdul Muktadir Choudhury and Project Director of BSCIC Abdul Latif Mondal.

Earlier, the mayor visited different stalls at the mela.

Leaders of the Ahmadiya Muslim Jamaat held a press conference at their central office in city's Bakshi Bazar area yesterday. — Star photo

IUBAT seminar on higher edn network

The International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) will hold a seminar on 'International Networking in Higher Education" Sunday at the auditorium of Academy for Planning and Development, Nilkhet, says a press release.

ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Minister for Foreign Affairs will attend the seminar as chief guest chaired by Prof Dr M Alimullah Miyan, Vice-Chancellor IUBAT.

Weather

Light rain likely

By Staff Correspondent

Light or moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Chittagong division and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions with moderately heavy fall at places over the Chittagong division, Met Office forecasts.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged during the time over Chittagong division and light rise elsewhere over the country.

The highest temperature of the country Thursday 36.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest 20.2 degrees Celsius was recorded at Chittagong.

The sun sets today (Friday) at 6-14 pm and rises tomorrow (Saturday) at 5-51 am.

Temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns yesterday are as follows:

Cities/Towns	Temperature Max	Temperature Min	Humidity 9 am	Humidity 6 pm
Dhaka	31.4	22.3	87	74
Chittagong	30.3	20.2	90	86
Rajshahi	30.3	22.7	93	68
Khulna	35.0	22.0	88	67
Barisal	32.0	21.5	92	78
Cox's Bazar	30.7	23.5	85	86
Sylhet	30.0	21.2	87	67
Rangpur	30.3	21.8	87	67

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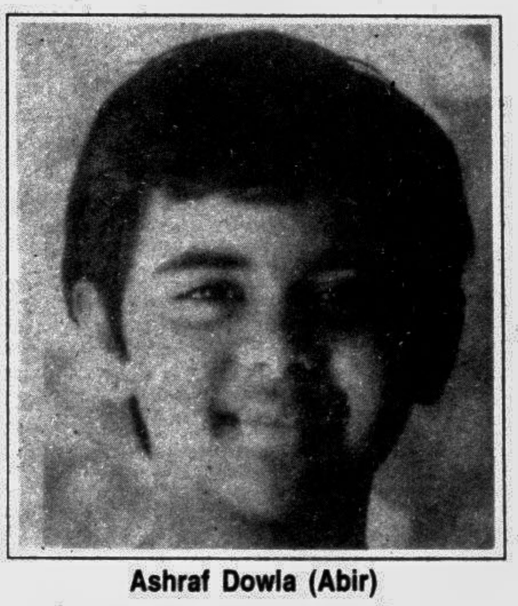

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In fond remembrance
The bereaved family and friends

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Applications with CV, references, and a recent photograph should be sent to P.O. Box No. D-199, C/o-The Daily Star, House No-II, Road No-3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. Kindly mark the envelope "A" or "B".

Applications received before 17 April 1994 will be considered and treated in strict confidence.

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২রা এপ্রিল '৯৪ ইং (১৯শে চৈত্র ১৪০০ সাল বাংলা) রোজ শনিবার হবিগঞ্জ জেলাস্থ অগ্রণী ব্যাংক গোপায়া শাখাটি বর্তমান অবস্থান হতে প্রস্তাবিত নতুন ভবনে স্থানান্তর করা হবে এবং ঐদিনই ব্যাংকের সকল দাপ্তরিক কার্যক্রম শুরু হবে।

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