

Dhaka Day by Day

Healers on the Footpath

by Nasiruddin Ahmed

Along with the service from city's sophisticated clinics, medicative treatment is being given to many people at the makeshift healthcare centres beside the busy streets of this metropolitan city.

These doctors neither have any professional training on medical science nor have any technical orientation. Resorting to a cassette player dubbed with problem and solution of some common diseases and with some empirical ideas of diagnosis — he prescribes medicine. It's a panacea centre, in his opinion. Sounds funny, but these mountebanks have a thriving business. In the city areas, beside footpaths of main intersection like Gullistan, Farmgate are the places of these doctors while hats and bazars in the rural areas serve for them the purpose. The doctor must have at his command rich rhetorics. Indeed, garrulity is his forte. Because, jugglery of words diagnoses diseases here. The medicine are without any manufacturing and expiry date, as if it never loses its efficacy.

These medicines are sold with concessional rate, pleading sometimes to refund money unless the disease get cured. To promote sale, often an extra item is offered. Sales seem more or less brisk. Common items like ointment for vertigo, herbal message oil for arthritis, vitamin tablets, syrup for blood deficiency, some seasonal cosmetics are available. Domestic insecticides have been included of late, among them rat killer is always the best seller. These

healthcare centres suffer setback during rain spells.

Enthusiasm is observed among the low-income and illiterate people over this therapy. Perhaps, affordable price is at the root of this patronage.

What attracts the people, are the models of skeleton, skull of human body, hookworms and above all, the mountebank's artful explanation and demonstration how germs are created in our body and attack us subsequently.

Besides treatment, customers are entertained with doctor's quibble, gesture, and enthralling persuasive style and intonation. These charlatans have an uncanny instinct for the gullible. And believing in magic and such things sell here well. Popular songs like *sader lao banilo more batragi* are played, relishing stories with moral endings like 'honesty is the best policy' are told, to hold the credulous people captivated. An spell is cast upon the audience, evoking laughter and clapping specially when the subject is sexually provocative. Here, the quack serves as a sleek salesman. Exposure is more important as the objective is the facilitate sales not diagnosis.

Anyway, how far they are successful in combating diseases is not known. But there is no doubt that this is no way of treating diseases. They are cashing in on the ignorance of common people. Until they prove any scientific basis of their treatment they should be banned to practice their healing power.



FICCI team meets Jamilur Reza Chy

A delegation of the Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) headed by its vice president Jean Pierre Raynaud called on Advisor for Energy and Mineral Resources and Water Resources Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury at his office yesterday, reports BSS.

The delegation apprised the advisor about the problems being faced by industries, particularly the process industries due to erratic power supply. The advisor presented position of foreign participation in the field of private power generation, gas and oil exploration drive and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) distribution network was also discussed.

The delegation also apprised the advisor about some problems and prospects of foreign participation in these fields. The advisor informed the delegation about the steps being taken to minimise the impact of load-shedding.

The meeting had a threadbare discussion on country's present demand and supply position of gas and electricity. The advisor underlined the need for uninterrupted supply of gas and electricity for overall development of the country. He opined load shedding of electricity cannot be avoided due to short fall of its generation but load shedding should be rationalised. He assured the delegation of all possible assistance of the government in promoting foreign investment in energy sector.

Secretary of FICCI Jahangir bin Alam and members of the organisation Gerhard G Doege, A K M Shamsuddin and A B A Sirajuddin were present.

Hasina condoles death of AL leader

Awami league chief Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of Syedpur thana Awami League president Kazi Omar Ali. He was 75, reports UNB.

In a message, she said Omar Ali was an active leader of the party and served as thana president for 25 years with sincerity.

Hasina prayed for the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the bereaved family.

Another report says: Sheikh Hasina also condoled the death of Maulana Mohammad Ali Ahmed Hawlader, father of Krishak League joint-secretary Harun-or Rashid Hawlader.

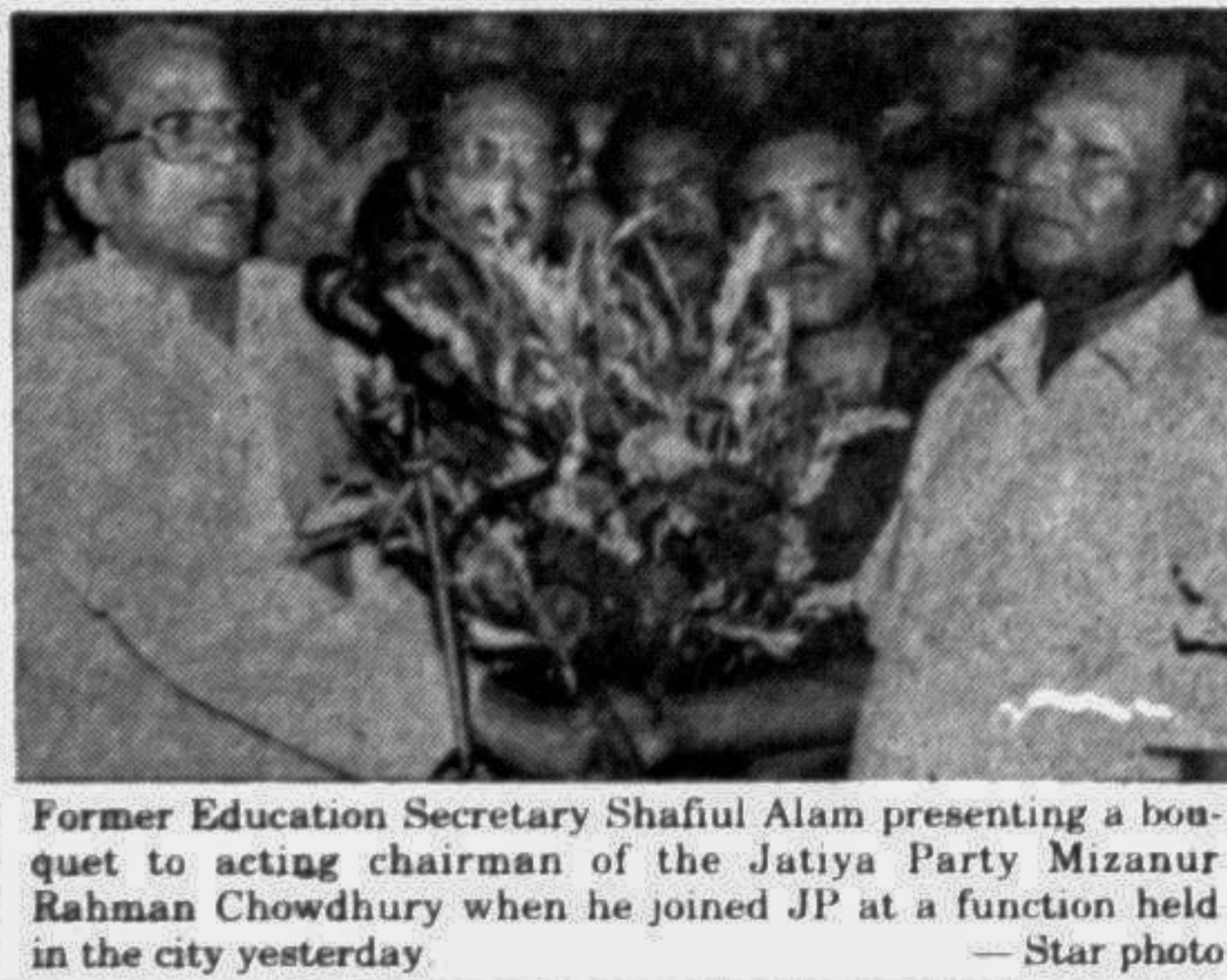
Australian envoy meets finance, planning adviser

Australian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Kenneth Aspinall met Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Wahiduddin Mahmood at his office yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting they discussed matters of mutual interest and international issues of common concern.

The specific issues that received prominence in the discussion included food assistance being provided by Australia to Bangladesh and Australian Assistance for expansion of agriculture research in Bangladesh.

They expressed the hope that the existing ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries would be strengthened further in the coming days.



Former Education Secretary Shafiqul Alam presenting a bouquet to acting chairman of the Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury when he joined JP at a function held in the city yesterday. — Star photo



Afzal Hossain Kawsar former upazila chairman of Gazipur presenting a bouquet to BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia upon his joining the party at a simple ceremony in the city yesterday. — Star photo

What's on today . . .

'Engineers Day': Engineers Institution of Bangladesh has organised programmes in observance of the 'Engineers Day'. Adviser of the Caretaker Administration Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury will be present as chief guest. Venue: Engineers Institution auditorium. Time: 4:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Ramna: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Kurmitola Golf Club. Time: 7:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Dhaka New City: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Sonargaon hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Motijheel: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Purbani hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

Lions Club of Dhaka: The regular board meeting of the club will be held. Venue: 3-3/B, Bijoynagar. Time: 7 pm.

. and tomorrow

Science lecture: Prof Shrishir Kumar Bhattacharya will deliver a lecture on cosmology. Venue: Auditorium of the National Museum of Science and Technology. Time: 4 pm.

CCDB seminar: The inaugural session of the two-day seminar on 'Credit for the Poor: Aspirants, Realities, and Prospects' organised by Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) will be held. Venue: CCDB training hall, 88 Senpara Parbatta, Mirpur-10. Time: 9 am.

UN joint programme to combat AIDS from tomorrow

The United Nations launches a combined programme in Bangladesh tomorrow to combat the deadly disease AIDS, reports UNB.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) will be formally launched through a press conference at the National Press Club.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Eimi Watanabe and other UNAIDS cosponsoring agencies — UNICEF, UNDP, UNFRA, UNESCO, WHO and World Bank — will address the issue of HIV/AIDS in the context of Bangladesh.

UNAIDS became operational worldwide on January 1 this year to fight the scourge.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), a multi-dimensional social, economic and health problem, warrants immediate and urgent action by all sectors of society to combat it, said a press release.

'Enlist CPB to preferential list of Radio, TV'

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) has alleged that the Adviser for Information dropped its name from the list of political parties for news coverage in radio and television, reports UNB.

"We assumed that eight political parties have been enlisted for news coverage on the basis of representation in the 5th parliament. If the assumption is correct the name of CPB cannot be dropped", CPB President Shahidullah Chowdhury and General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim said in a joint statement yesterday.

They said CPB was represented by five members in the 5th parliament though they had crossed the floor on political ground.

Protesting the 'biased move' of the Information Adviser, the CPB leaders demanded enlisting of CPB to the preferential list of radio and television.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office said moderately heavy falls at places in Chittagong division and at one or two places elsewhere over the country are also likely during the period.

Day temperature may remain unchanged over the country, but rainfall activities are likely to increase at the end of the period.

Country's highest temperature 36.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Saikhira and the lowest 23 degree at Rangamat. The sun sets today at 6:30 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:24 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	max	min	morning	evening
Dhaka	35.0	26.4	78	72
Chittagong	35.6	26.6	78	77
Rajshahi	36.0	26.3	77	—
Khulna	35.6	26.2	77	69
Barisal	34.4	24.6	84	78
Sylhet	34.0	26.5	73	63
Cox's Bazar	34.0	25.5	65	66

Funds for polling FBCCI chief welcomes EC directive

FBCCI President Salman F Rahman welcomed the Election Commission announcement that contenders in the ensuring polls will have to account for the sources of funds used by them in their election campaigns, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday he also welcomed the EC requirement that all candidates must submit personal income-tax returns as part of the disclosure requirements for being a candidate for the general elections.

"These measures have been a long-standing demand of the business community, and we feel that they are essential in order to ensure fairness, accountability and equality in the election process," Rahman said.

The business community leader observed that the Election Commission's announcement was extremely praiseworthy and confidence-inspiring for the ordinary citizens and business people alike.

While congratulating the Election Commission for taking such steps to ensure transparency in election expenditure, he also noted that violators of this rule would be subject to fines and imprisonment.

"We hope that the enforcement of the accounting system instituted by the Election Commission will be strict and impartial," said Rahman, who is also contesting the June 12 parliament election from his Samridha Bangladesh party.

This will ensure confidence in the validity of the election process and set the stage for reasonable campaigning by all political parties and persons, he added.



Photo exhibition on King Bhumibol May 9

The Embassy of Thailand in Dhaka is going to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's accession to the throne by holding a rare photographic exhibition of King's activities at Hotel Sonargaon in the city on May 9, at the Ball Room beginning from 9 AM, says a press release.

The fifteenth anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne gives the Thai nation an unique opportunity to celebrate an occasion that has never taken place in the long history of Thailand. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej will become the first Thai king to have reigned for 50 years. Royal, State and religious ceremonies are being held throughout 1995 and will be held until December 31, 1996 with the actual Golden Jubilee ceremonies taking place on June 9, 1996, the day His Majesty the King ascended to the throne.

Mentionably the rare photographs are moving to the countries where the Kingdom have their missions on rotation and May 9, 1996 has been selected for Bangladesh to celebrate the auspicious occasion, added the release.

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Reforms in Budgeting and Expenditure Control Phase 2A

NOTICE FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Applications are invited for prequalification of reputed software development firms capable of writing database applications of a financial nature in Foxpro. Only those firms with an established Foxpro development base need apply and preference will be given to those with experience of government information system work. An information sheet and questionnaire can be obtained from the Team Leader, Reforms in Budgeting and Expenditure Control, Phase 2A, 7th Floor, Bastra Bhaban, Dhaka. (Tel: 810134-7)

The pre-qualification questionnaire along with supporting documentation should be returned to the above office by 20th May 1996.

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The last date for applications Sunday, 9 June, 1996.

Office of the Registrar
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