

TRIBUTES TO S.M. HOSSAIN

The Saviour of DU

by M. N. Huda

Dr. S.M. Hossain became Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University in 1948 and served till 1953 — a very critical time for Dhaka University, East Pakistan and Pakistan. Before that he had been an outstanding student of Dhaka and Oxford, and Professor of Arabic & Islamic Studies at Dhaka University.

His valuable research work on Hadith Literature is highly prized by those who know. It is published in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and deserves publication in Bengali through the courtesy of Islamic Foundation and Bangla Academy.

The biggest problem that Dhaka University faced in the forties was a heavy exodus of senior teachers from all departments; it was and aftermath of the partition of the country into India and Pakistan. Most of the senior teachers who happened to be Hindus, preferred to leave for India, and a great vacuum was created. Whether intentional or not, it looked as if Dhaka University was really on the floor, and would not be able to stand on its feet soon. Eminent Professors like K.R. Qanungo (History), N.M. Basu (Mathematics), S.K. De (Bengali & Sanskrit), H.D. Bhattacharyya (Philosophy), and many others left Dhaka University: Prof S.N. Bose (Physics), and J.G. Ghosh (Chemistry), had left a bit earlier; Prof Mahmood Husain (English) and Mahmud Husain (History), left for assignments with Government of Pakistan. It was really a deluge for Dhaka

University and determined efforts had to be made to recover from it, which fell to the lot of Dr. S.M. Hossain as the new Vice-Chancellor. This naturally became his first priority, and he started exploring all possibilities; saving Dhaka University from this crisis, and trying to bring it back on rails, kept him busy, mentally and physically, twenty-four hours of day and night.

Dr. Hossain's strategies were two: (i) importing Professors from abroad, and (ii) recruiting students of Dhaka University who were being trained in UK and USA. This was received well by Dhaka University's own products trained abroad, who readily agreed to come back to save and build their own alma mater. Of the Professors imported temporarily for five years or so, few names are: A.G. Stock and Turner (English), Pinnel (Mathematics), Zernike (Chemistry), Dahm (Law), Newman (Political Science), Alsop (International Relations), and so on; some of them were weak in English, but each was 'jewel' in his field of specialisation; initial difficulties over-

they and their students fared quite well.

Dr. Hossain gave his life, as it were, to secure the services of these teachers, senior-not-so-senior, and junior, for the University. He would leave no stone unturned, to attain his object, i.e. to equip the University so well as he could.

He would see, contact and write to anyone who could help in the matter. Mr. Fazlur Rahman who was then Education (and Commerce), Minister for Pakistan, rendered substantial help in contacting foreign scholars for appointment at Dhaka University for specified periods; Dr. Hossain had his personal contact and approach to every one who mattered, and we succeeded in getting the services of a number of illustrious Professors. Our own foreign-trained scholars, were mostly his students. To them his approach was personal and effective, and many of them readily agreed to come and help; and so they did. This is how the most serious crisis of the University was handled, and we saw the light of day at the end of the tunnel.

In the second category, Dhaka University's own students trained abroad who make themselves available to rebuild the University, included M.O. Ghani (Soil Science), M.H. Khundkar and Mafizuddin Ahmed (Chemistry), Innas Ali and A.M. Chowdhury (Physics), A.F.A. Husain (Chemistry), M.N. Huda (Economics), K.S. Mursahid and S. Sajjad Hussain (English), N.U.A. Siddiqui (Law), and many others, who began to work in all seriousness. Each one of them was brilliant in his field, and did not take much of a time to pick up and polish the lost thread. Some of our students were going abroad for higher studies, and their performance abroad helped us a lot in re-establishing the reputation of Dhaka University in the academic world, with pleasure and satisfaction on both sides. Several other teachers who were not ex-students of Dhaka University also adorned the faculty — I.H. Zuberi in English, Dr. Shahidullah in Bengali, Dr. A.B.M. Habibullah in Islamic History & Culture, Dr. W.H.A. Shadani and Moidul Islam Borah in Persian & Urdu. On the teaching side there was

surely a loss but fortunately not as big as apprehended.

In the area of students, there was a perceptible improvement in quantity and quality; we had an influx of students from Calcutta, who had to be provided for within the limited facilities of Dhaka University. Good students like Nurul Islam, Moazzamul Huq and Mosharraf Hossain came in Economics; Nurul Islam, Mosharraf Hossain and Rehman Sobhan were founder-members of the planning Commission of Bangladesh. Moazzam is abroad.

Beginning from the thirties Muslim students of Dhaka University began their mark in administrative services, and the process continued and improved throughout the forties.

In the fifties they got into the Civil Service of Pakistan in increasing numbers, many of our 'star' administrators — our civil, police and other services are dominated by products of Dhaka University, and later, other Universities.

From mid-thirties, Muslim students of Bengal were being



S.M. Hossain, 1901-1991.

gradually initiated into the politics of the time. The Bengal Muslim Students' Association, and its President A. Waseque were very close to Fazlul Huq (not Sher-e-Bangla yet!). Pakistan was in the air, but self-determination by the students was on the ground.

This urge continued to grow, and blossomed into the demand for Pakistan, in the schools and colleges all over Bengal; and Pakistan was really born in Bengal during the elections of 1946. We had a big shock at the partition of Bengal. A dear friend Nazir Ahmad became the first 'martyr' in the course of Pakistan right on the Dhaka University campus. Celebrations for Pakistan were warm and spontaneous, but East Bengal had a big mental reservation and concern for

future. This sense of concern grew with every 'inconsiderate' action by the Government of Pakistan, its leaders and its henchmen in the Government of East Bengal. Actions such as attempts to impose Urdu on unwilling Bengal, the announcement by the Head of the State to have Urdu alone as the State language of Pakistan, which was vehemently opposed right on his face, curtailing the majority of East Bengal in the Constituent Assembly, reducing a de jure federal government to a de facto unitary government in Pakistan, filling all positions of secretaries to government of East Bengal with non-Bengalies, and so on and so on.

In 1948 and 1949, East Bengal virtually revolted against Pakistan and the Muslim League; an Awami Muslim League was formed by Maulana Bhasani, and young leaders like Shamsul Huq and Sk. Mujib. Dhaka University students were wholeheartedly with Awami League. Protests, rallies, demonstrations became the order of the day. Dhaka University's academic work was disturbed except for the few; these were the first days of Dr. S.M. Hossain as vice-Chancellor.

On paper, the University was autonomous, but in fact heavily bound to government. This was understood very well by the non-Bengali CSP Secretaries to the government, who came with a mission to make 'gentlemen' of

Hats off to Vice-Chancellor S.M. Hossain. May his soul rest in peace!
Dr. M.N. Huda served in the Dhaka University for a number of years eventually taking over as the Head of the Department of Economics. He later served as the Finance Minister in Ziaur Rahman's Cabinet.

AN UPRIGHT MAN

IT is in our long-cherished cultural tradition that we think of our teachers in glowing terms, seeing in them, especially in retrospect, qualities which transcend their academic classroom performance. We are close to them through mutual concern, with devotion from our side and care from theirs dominating our ties.

A touching story I once heard of a teacher is that when he was dying and everything was getting hazy, he whispered, "It is getting dark, my boys, you may go home."

Looking back on the life and times of the late Syed Moazzam Hussain, one great

A.G. Stock would look at my chances of sitting next to some bright-eyed boys from the Presidency College of Calcutta — Zillur Rahman Siddiqui was one of them — in the same class and digest Shakespeare and swallow Milton day in and day out.

Dr. Hussain was quite firm but polite in turning me down. It was then I told him something about my modest journalistic ambition, with a just a gentle hint about my flair for writing in English. Then, I offered to show him some clippings of my articles published by an English-language weekly in Sylhet. He agreed to give me another interview.

request to write a personal note to his friend in the university days. "Let Moazzem take his own decision without any pressure from me," he had said.

We saw quite a bit of Dr. Hussain at various functions of the hall. In less than a year's time, he became the Vice-Chancellor and started dealing with a variety of administrative and semi-political problems, ranging from filling in the void created by the departure of non-Muslim teachers for India to sporadic strikes, and one of which called by the low-paid employees of the university which saw the emergence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then a student of law, on the political scene. Then, we saw the first signs of the Language Movement, following the visit of Mohammad Ali Jinnah to Dhaka.

Slowly but surely, the University of Dhaka was getting drawn into the political crosscurrents of the country. A quiet and a slightly conservative man, unused to political challenges, Dr. Hussain probably watched the unfolding scenario with a mixture of alarm and concern. However, as far as we could see, he kept this reaction to himself. Outwardly, he was sure and confident, almost unflappable and in sympathy with the hopes and aspirations of the student community. His performance has its lapses, deliberate or otherwise, but in time, they were no more than footnotes in the story of his life and time.

It is gratifying for this newspaper that the leading tribute to the late Dr. Syed Moazzem Hussain comes from Dr. M.N. Huda, another distinguished teacher during our time in the university, one of the most affable personalities we have known in our academic world and later in the government when he served as the Finance Minister in the government of the late President Ziaur Rahman.



MY WORLD

S.M. Ali

quality of the former distinguished teacher that immediately comes to my mind is his uprightness. This impression has something to do with my own admission into Dhaka University and with my effort to get a place in the Salimullah Muslim Hall where Dr. Hussain was the Provost in the year, 1947 when I ventured into my university education.

With a poor second division obtained from second rate college in Calcutta, and that too in Intermediate Science, my chances of getting a place in the Honours Department of English Language and Literature were just as slim as finding a seat in the prestigious Salimullah Hall.

During my first interview with him, Dr. Hussain patiently explained to me why I could not get a place in his hall. It was obviously pretty hard for him to tell a student right on his face that his past academic record fell below the required standard. For the same reason, he doubted if the then head of the English Department, Ms.

My second meeting with the Provost went far better than I had expected. Dr. Hussain flipped through my scrap book, I lanced at the headlines of my reports and even read one or two pieces with some interest. Then, without wasting any time, he handed over to me two short notes, one giving me a place in his hall and the other recommending to Ms. Stock that she might consider me as a student for her department.

What impressed me was Dr. Hussain's approach to the matter. It was straight-forward and somewhat original.

In fact, the Provost could have adopted a less upright position in giving me a place in the hall and write a letter of recommendation to Ms. Stock for a seat in her department.

After all, he knew my father very well, as one of his contemporaries, with the late Altaf Hussain and the late Mizanur Rahman.

However, being another upright man in his own way, my father had turned down my



Prashanto Karmakar Buddha (inset) won this year's Okamoto Prize of Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), Tokyo, for his photo entry entitled 'Life'.

ELECTRICITY might be killing us — at least wearing us down.

In his new book *Electropollution — How to Protect Yourself Against It*, author Roger Coghill explains how everyday items are potentially harmful. Sources of electropollution include fluorescent lights, cellular telephones, overhead and underground power cables, televisions, even your digital watch. Now, researchers are asking whether it is more than coincidence that the increase in diseases like cancer, ME, multiple sclerosis, hyperactivity in children, allergies and even Aids have occurred alongside enormous growth in the production and use of electricity. We can't see it, smell it or touch it, but it could be responsible for much of the stress of modern day living.

Electromagnetic radiation is the waves produced by the magnetism of any electrical current. Scientists have shown that these electromagnetic fields can affect human beings. One experiment showed that when a light bulb was switched on in one part of a

Calcutta Revisited

From page 9

thing in what was literally a swamp — and still is — is something that can indeed pep up the Bengali spirit which has been sagging interminably since the forties. But a far greater achievement that manifests itself when you take a ride on the Calcutta metro is the civility with which the crowd — and every individual in it — conducts itself. Then why do not the same people behave the same way while on the ground and not under it? Part of the question can be answered — and part of it must remain at best a conjecture shot with quite a modicum of mystery.

Whatever may Calcutta appear to a newcomer to it specially from far west — this filthy slum of a city used and abused in the daytime by at least 10 million people, a motley composed of poor and backward illiterate and hopelessly placed representatives of perhaps all of India's thousand social and economic classes come from perhaps all of India's thousand districts — ticks on with incredibly lean and charming figures of violent crimes, molestation of women and road accidents. If one can very aptly call it a truly free people's city with its freedom worn — or rather flaunted — for everyone to see and participate, another can with equal application say that it is the biggest city on earth of the small man where the roads belong to the pedestrians and not to the whizzing vehicles and buildings belong to their tenants and not their owners.

Well, that is but only the outward manifestation of this sardine-packed megalopolis squeezed into the area of a middle-sized city becoming, in its own way, the most humane city — or shall we better say human — subscribing pervasively to and flying the standard of 'accommodation'. The spick and span underground and the way people keep it so is but an extension of that supreme human quality of accommodation originating in overcrowding and its resultant squalor.

Electricity : What it May Be Doing to You

building, EEO records of people in a different part of the same building registered the change. In other words, our bodies are sensitive to electromagnetic energy, so much so that it can make us ill. The first warning sign came from the USA in 1979 when Dr Nancy Wertheimer and Dr Ed Leeper found that children living next to overhead electricity lines were more likely to develop leukaemia. Since then, further studies have shown links with brain tumours, depression and suicide.

One US researcher found that electrical utility workers were 13 times more likely to develop brain tumours than the rest of the population. A Midlands doctor discovered a higher than average rate of depression and suicide in people living near electric power cables. Yet the evidence was there 60 years earlier and ignored. Roger Coghill describes how, in 1929, a German scientist named Von Pohl discovered that high levels of naturally occurring radiation could

cause cancer. Animals can still sense these spots of geopathic on the earth's surface and avoid them.

When Roger Coghill studied cases of cot death, he found that all the babies concerned were sleeping close to important sources of electromagnetic energy, such as immersion heaters. The nearer the babies were positioned, the earlier in their short lives they died.

In the early 1980s, Canadian researchers in

Ontario found that the radiation from video display units (VDUs) caused hyperactivity in children.

Another Canadian study made the link between women working on VDUs for more than 20 hours a week and an increased rate of miscarriage and birth defects.

Ontario law now excuses pregnant women from working with VDUs. Compensation has been awarded to radar technicians, pilots and air-traffic controllers who developed cataracts as a result of exposure to microwave radiation.

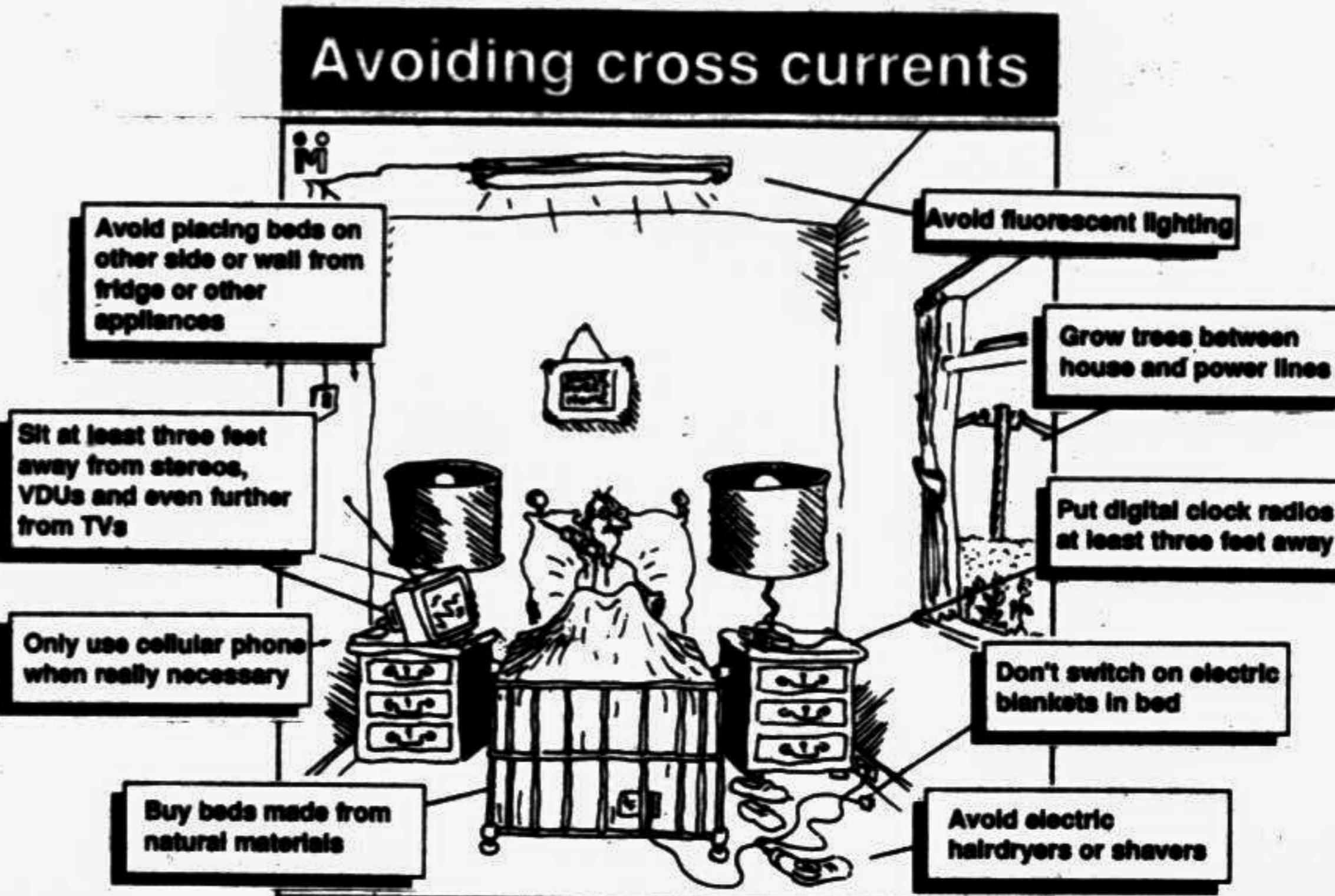
Yet it may well be the systems we are least aware of that are causing the most severe damage.

Radar systems used mostly for defence purposes have grown more and more powerful since the Second World War. Men working near the microwave transmitters of radar stations were found to be more likely to father children with Downs Syndrome. Army helicopter pilots who had been exposed to radar were at more risk of fathering children with birth defects.

For most, exposure is limited to appliances like televisions, VDUs connected to home computers and electric blankets, as well as the low-level radiation from electrical wiring.

One family living in Ludlow consulted Roger Coghill because they were concerned about the effects of a nearby electricity substation. All four members of the family had experienced distressing symptoms since moving into the house, which also happened to be in line with a microwave tower a few miles away.

— GEMINI NEWS



WRITE TO MITA

Dear Mita,
Our neighbour's son comes to play with our 4-yr old daughter. I don't mind his coming but he breaks the toys and makes a mess of the rooms. What can I do to stop him? He is so rough that my daughter does not like playing with him. Do you think it will be very rude if I tell my neighbours?
Samira, Dhaka.

Dear Sabiha,
Wives and mothers are often taken for granted in our culture. This is because society has defined their role and it is not expected that they will protest. The awareness that women want something more out of life than being just a mother and wife is very recent. Most men and their forefathers have not yet learnt to how to respond to their needs. Have patience and bring this up in family conversation. Initiate a serious discussion on this topic. Your family might go through a new process of learning from which everyone will benefit.

Dear Samira,
Yes, it is appropriate for you to have a talk with your neighbour regarding their son's behavior. He is at an age when boys like playing rough and maybe his parents know how to deal with it but there is no need for you to tolerate this. Next time he comes tell him he is welcome only if he abides by certain rules.

Dear Mita,
Suppose a husband beats his wife and then says sorry, should she forgive him? This has happened to my friend for the last 4 years. They have been married for 6 years. Outwardly he seems like a nice man but has a horrible temper and cannot control it, what should my friend do?
[Fat Ara, Dhaka.

Dear Mita,
My husband expects me to run the house perfectly but does not do anything to help. He is so busy with his work that he does not even spend one hour with the family. Even when he is at home his mind is at work. I feel frustrated and resentful. What can I do?
Sultana, Chittagong.

Dear Ifat,
The person who beats his wife regularly and then says sorry should definitely not be forgiven. Your friend is a victim of abuse and should get away from this situation as soon as it is realistically possible. Since you have not given much details I am not being able to give any serious advice. Many factors have to be considered such as children, financial situation etc. At this point separation could be a consideration followed by counselling for both partners.

Dear Sultana,
This is a common complaint from wives of successful and busy husbands. Instead of keeping it to yourself and harbouring resentment have a talk with him. Sometimes people don't realize even when they are hurting a loved one. However busy he is he must spend time with his family and as for running the house perfectly, please ask him to show you how.

Dear Mita,
My whole family takes me for granted — my children, husband and everyone. No one cares to find out what I want; all they understand is to have their needs fulfilled. I am finding it more and more difficult to please them all the time. Their work is always more important, so I have to give up my work, recreation for them. Recently I have started resenting this. Please advise.
Sabiha, Gulshan, Dhaka.

Run by a trained and experienced Family and Marriage counsellor, assisted by a professional team of doctor, psychologist and lawyer, this column will answer questions relating to family, marriage, health, family laws, and social and interpersonal relationships. Please address letters to Mita, The Daily Star, GPO Box 3257 or to 28/1, Toynbee Circular Road, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.