

Dhaka Day by Day

Of Confidence and Billet-Doux

by Fayza Haq

ROMEO and Juliet had the maid and the friar to confide in, apart from the well-meaning cousin. Cleopatra resorted to her maids to spell out her secret hopes and desires. Malvolio went round the bend with the mischief created by Maria's tricks with love letters. And so Shakespeare's tales run on.

In the Dhaka verandahs, drawing-rooms, offices, college campuses and school classrooms there is the constant whispering and exchange of confidences. I know of a young woman, who had recently come to Dhaka, who reported to her friends, "I met this impressive man at an embassy dinner. He reminded me of the Stonehenge. He's invited me to see his film on Antarctica. What steps should I take?" She was told in return by her girl-friends, "In Dhaka if you enter a man's house for dinner, you don't leave without an engagement ring. Look sharp, hang on to him, and hope for the best."

When somebody paraded her admirer to her nearest and dearest gaggle of girl friends they warned her sharply. "He dyes his hair and isn't manly at all. He put on a ridiculous act of being a 'Jama' already. How often has he taken you out to 'Sheraton' or 'Sonargaon'? He's over 40 and not married. There must be something wrong with him," and so this Dhanmandi office buzzed with advice for the bewildered woman.

Another time someone confided in me in her Eskaton parlour. He lives in Calcutta and has a roaring business there. The only trouble is that he is surrounded with beautiful women all the time. How do I fit into his life? Will religious differences be an antagonising factor? Will my little daughter take to him? I'm weary of this office work that dangles round me for decades. I would dearly like to have a reprieve. Even my bones ache, I fear, on some mornings. Should I take the plunge?"

On another occasion a friend and I sat on her Hathkhol terrace, having 'singaras', 'halwa' and cups of tea, and discussed her possible future with her present paramour for hours. These discussions ultimately stretched for days. "He's an engineer living in Canada. I know he will accept my children along with me, but will I be able to take a second-rate job of dish-washing or handling grocery bags. Life becomes so mechanical in the west. After work you have to come home and do the house-work as well. That can't be fun. I think I'd best wait for some other proposals. But I'm not getting any younger or prettier, my friend confided.

Another acquaintance of mine phoned into my Dhanmandi house to make a phone call to a married man. "He call me 'Bau Rani'. He's so

intellectual. His voice is so seductive on the telephone," I had to make her wake up to realities and throw cold water on her enthusiasm for this man with polygamous tendencies. "Is he some elephant seal that he needs more than one female?" I reprimanded my friend sharply.

It is easy to advise others, because one can look at the situation in an objective way when one is not involved oneself. My friend in Eskaton complained that her daughter, still at school, was caught sending and receiving love letters. "People are using her. She hasn't even finished her schooling and there are these mobsters trying to rope her into a romance, and an ultimate elopement. This is because her father has ample property. We were so sedate in our days in the convent. How does one handle teenagers without being too harsh to them?" She asked with intense frustration.

It is not always that one writes to the agony columns in Dhaka — not that many are available to indulge in the first place. "I've found a number of love letters from different sources in my daughter's desk drawer I'm packing her off to a hostel in India. She's also picked up smoking and other abhorring habits in this city," informed another friend of mine in Banani, the other day.

Yet are love letters so harmful? They are certainly not limited to the teen-aged and starry-eyed. I myself have helped sort out the love letters of a colleague of mine. Her friend did not understand Bangla, being an Indian. My friend's English was not all that marvellous. I found endless vicarious pleasure in penning out amorous messages. This way I proved myself useful too.

In another case I began frequenting nearby commercial house. The main purpose was to help my friend reply to her Belgian boy-friend who wrote her a stream of letters. Sometimes he used French words too. She speaks fluent English and does not write poorly either, but needs me as a prop, when she replies to this amorous messages by mail. "Why does this woman frequent this office so often," ensued the gossip in the Motijheel office.

Sometimes I have known my friends to receive too frequent billet-doux. With full time jobs, and other commitments, they seldom find the time to answer all the letters in the way they deserve. "It costs, I admit, but use picture postcards or 'hello' cards from New Market or 'Arong' or even the kiosks at the local hotel," I usually advise my friends, who find answering letters in time a considerable problem indeed.



Irregularities in by-polls won't be tolerated:CEC

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf Saturday said any kind of irregularity, indiscipline or activity by any quarter that might hamper the coming bye-elections to the 11 seats of the Jatiya Sangsad and the referendum would be tackled with an iron hand, reports BSS.

The Chief Election Commissioner was addressing four separate gatherings of people of all walks of life in Faridpur, Madaripur, Barisal

Hajee Danesh College reopens Sept 17

The classes of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Agriculture College at Dinalpur will resume from September 18 and all the residential hostels of the college will open on September 17, a college press release said in Dhaka Saturday reports BSS.

LI observers to oversee referendum

The Liberty International (LI), a Bangladesh based International Human Rights Organisation, has formed six observer teams headed by its President MA Muteleb to oversee the coming referendum, a Liberty press release said here Saturday, reports BSS.

Liberty Director General Alokemoy Naha and members Prof Rezaul Islam, Enayet Hossain Chowdhury, AHM Khaliquezaman and Emdadul Hque will lead the teams.

The Liberty International having consultative status with the UN (ECOSOC) would follow internationally recognised guidelines for referendum observing, evaluate the referendum process objectively and prepare a report to be distributed nationally and internationally including relevant department of the United Nations and the media.

The organisation had also monitored the last upazila and parliamentary elections and placed some recommendations before the Acting President and the Election Commission

and Noakhali. The concerned district administrations had organised the gatherings.

Election Commissioner Justice Syed Misbah Uddin Hossain, officials of the Election Commission Secretariat, concerned government officials and local elite attended the gatherings.

Explaining the background, significance and importance of the referendum of September 15, Justice Rouf said every conscious citizen of the country should participate spontaneously in it which involves an important question of changing the form of government.

The Chief Election Commissioner called upon the local elite to persuade people of their localities to cast vote in the referendum by elucidating the significance of the elections.

He said the countrymen would determine in which form of government the country would be run.

It is the responsibility of all quarters to ensure the spontaneous participation of the voters in the referendum, he said.

In this respect, Justice Rouf explained the outline of the publicity service of the Election Commission to convince the people to cast their votes in the referendum.

ATP flying smoothly

The Advanced Turboprop (ATP) aircraft, now operating in the Biman's domestic routes, has been proving its worth with excellent flying record in the first week after reintroduction in Biman fleet on August 31, a Biman press release said in Dhaka Saturday, reports BSS.

Out of 26 flights operated so far, two were delayed due to bad weather. About 1,000 passengers have travelled and 8000 kgs of cargo has been lifted to and from Dhaka during the first week.

The ATP is now operating between the capital city and northern region of the country with destinations in Rajshahi and Saidpur.

The second ATP is expected to resume flying from September 12, the press release said.

Nabila Kabir's death condoled

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy held a meeting Saturday to condoled the death of artist Nabila Kabir Lopa, a promoter of Bangladeshi art and culture in the USA, reports UNB.

Speakers at the meeting recalled with gratitude the contribution of the late dancer and said the vacuum created by her premature death will not be easily filled in.

Lopa, daughter of Amanullah Chowdhury MP and General Secretary of Bulbul Academy for Fine Arts (BAFA) and renowned dancer Begum Rahiza Khanam (Jhunu), died of cerebral infection Friday.

Director General of the Academy Kamal Lohani presided over the meeting which was addressed, among others, by Director of Fine Arts Department Syed Jahangir, Director of Drama and Film Department SM Mohsin, Director of Dance and Music Omar Faruk and dancer Dipa Khandker.

Kuwaiti team due Sept 10

A seven-member inter-ministerial delegation of the state of Kuwait led by the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, is expected to arrive in Bangladesh on September 10, an embassy press release said Saturday, reports BSS.

The delegation will comprise representatives of the ministers of Public Works, Electricity and Water, Health and Communications.

The delegation is expected to meet officials and discuss and explore ways and means of utilising Bangladeshi technical and skilled manpower specialised in the reconstruction of various Kuwaiti projects.

TV Sunday

- 5.00 Opening announcement, Al Quran
- 5.15 Programme Summary
- 5.20 Reciting from the Bible
- 5.30 News in Bangla
- 5.30 Jhilmili
- 5.55 Sports programme.
- 6.30 Special programme in Int'l Literacy Day
- 7.05 Tagore songs
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 Probaho
- 9.00 Drama Series: Oshin
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Sanglap
- 11.30 Khabar/The News
- 11.45 Closing.



Swadhin Chhatra Parishad holding demonstration in the city Saturday demanding arrest of terrorists from campus. — Star photo.

'Dr Ibrahim found real meaning of life thru' serving community'

Acting Chief Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman Saturday said, late Dr Mohammad Ibrahim, as a doctor, succeeded in making a permanent place in the heart of the common man for his self-less service to the distressed humanity, reports BSS.

Referring to the establishment of the Diabetic Hospital and all other memorable contributions of Dr Ibrahim, the Acting Chief Justice said that the deceased had proved that social services could be rendered without loitering on and around the slippery path of politics.

Justice Rahman was addressing as chief guest at the "Dr Ibrahim Memorial Lecture" organised by the Officers' Club of Bangladesh Diabetic Society at the Diabetic Hospital auditorium in the afternoon.

The memorial lecture, presented by renowned scientist and litterateur Dr Abdullah Al-Muti Sharfuddin entitled "Science and Technical Education in the Development of Human Resources in Bangladesh," underscored the need for a united and integrated thrust to synthesize correctly the informal and formal curriculum with science and technical studies for totally recasting the existing education system.

Plea to buy electric poles from lowest bidders

Representatives of three local electric poles and accessories manufacturers Saturday alleged that some officials of the concerned ministry were favouring Indian supplier for the "16-town project" of the Power Development Board.

Addressing a press conference at Hotel Sheraton, they said this was an anti-national move which would discourage growth of local industries.

The representatives present at the press conference were Managing Director of Gemcon Limited, Kazi Shahed Ahmad, Director of Gemcon Limited, Md Khaliquezaman, Director of Karim Pipe Mills Limited, Joinul Karim and

Chaird by club President Dr CM Delwar Rana, the function was also address, among others, by Bangladesh Diabetic Society National Council Member Dr Fashuddin Mahtab, Society President Alamgir MA Kabir, Society Director General and Chief Consultant Major General (Rtd) AR Khan and club General Secretary Mohammad Farid Hossain Miah.

Terming Dr Ibrahim a "successful man," Justice Rahman said, he had found the real meaning of life through serving the community. The Diabetic Society and Hospital carry forward the memories of its founder, he added.

Dr Al Muti Sharfuddin, in his paper, gave full statistical details in the fields of secondary, higher secondary and higher educations, and opined that the state of science and technological studies in the country was very frustrating.

The rate of science education in 1980 was 29.8 per cent which dropped to 19.3 per cent in 1990, Dr Sharfuddin pointed out. The percentage, as per need of the nation, should be not less than 50, he added.

Dr Sharfuddin listed, among others, the lack of trained teachers and the absence of opportunities to be well-versed in the newer innovations, shortage of research equipments, tools, books and other related materials, inclination towards conventional studies, economic constraints and indifference to the use of mother-tongue in higher education and research as the main obstacles in introducing science and technical education in the country.

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Textile College classes resume Sept 17

The classes of the College of Textile Technology will resume on September 17 and the dormitories will reopen on September 16 at 8 am, a college press release said Saturday, reports BSS.

This was decided at a joint meeting of teachers and Council of Education Affairs held on September 4.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Met office on Saturday has forecast light to moderate rain or showers with a few moderately heavy fall accompanied temporary gusty winds at places likely to occur at most places over Chittagong, Khulna and Dhaka divisions and at many places over Rajshahi division during the next 36 hours.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Rainfall activities may decrease during the subsequent two days.

Rainfall recorded on the day at different places of the country were, Mymensingh-11cm, Chuadanga, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati and Hatiya-5 cm each, Barisal-4cm, Tangail and Majdicourt-3cm each, Bogra and Jessore-2cm each and Dhaka, Comilla, Ishwardi and Patuakhali-1cm each.

The highest temperature recorded on Saturday at Satkhira and the lowest at Mymensingh.

Temperature and humidity recorded on Saturday at major cities and towns were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius	Humidity in percentage
Dhaka	Max 29.6	Min 24.5
Chittagong	29.7	25.1
Rajshahi	30.0	24.2
Khulna	32.5	24.0
Dinajpur	27.5	24.5
Bogra	28.4	24.0
Satkhira	33.5	25.3
Mymensingh	27.0	21.4
Srimangal	29.5	25.6
Cox's Bazar	29.8	25.0

The sun sets in Dhaka on Sunday at 6.11 pm and it rises on Monday at 5.43 am.



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GRANTS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

To assist in developing in-country research capacities, the Essential National Health Research Working Group, in collaboration with ICDDR,B and BRAC, is initiating a scheme to support projects by young researchers in Bangladesh.

Potential young researchers from different institutions, ministries and organizations in Bangladesh are eligible to apply. The applicants must have a recognized university degree and demonstrated interest in research. They should be Bangladeshi and aged 40 years or less. Women and researchers from outside Dhaka are particularly encouraged to apply. Students of NIPSOM, IPGMR or the universities who are required to submit a thesis as a part of their academic pursuits may also apply. The applicants must be sponsored by their respective institutions. Research will be funded in any area of public health interest having direct policy implications.

FORMAT FOR INITIAL PROPOSAL (maximum four pages)

- 1 Title
- 2 Background (of the proposed study) (Single page) Statement of the problem
- 3 Objectives (Quarter page) Specific aims of the project i.e. clearly defined hypotheses that will be tested and questions that the research will help answer
- 4 Methodology (Half page) Brief description of data collection procedure and analysis plan
- 5 Implications (of the research) (Half page) Benefits and use of the research findings
- 6 Time schedule (Quarter page)
- 7 Budget (Half page)
- 8 Curriculum vitae of principal and other investigators with institutional affiliation

Interested persons are requested to submit an initial proposal in the above format by 5 October 1991 to the Coordinator, ENHR Secretariat, 66 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212. Phone 600161-4.

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For each position, depending on the qualification, experience and other qualitative factors, attractive compensation package will be offered to the selected incumbent through negotiation. Apply alongwith a detailed Bio-data and one passport/stamp size recent photograph by September 16, 1991 to:



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