

Dhaka Day by Day

Washing the Linen in Public

by Fayza Haq

Through the flu or "mossy" bites and the consequential fevers, Nazir Miah continues working six days a week, at the business of washing clothes, ironing them, and distributing them to the various houses.

He began this job 15 years back, for lack of anything better to do as he has no formal education and has only his muscles and energy to rely on. He is paid Tk 4 per piece of item, and does washing on the basis of hundred pieces a lot at each house. He operates on one of the many lakes of Dhanmondi, and has to compete with the various mushrooming laundries that are coming up in the area who have more manpower and organisational facilities.



The 'dhobi' at work.

When the clothes have stubborn ugly marks, he sends them to a tiny shop in New Market, where they remove the stains with lemon, milk, and other items. This applies to gravy marks, ink stains etc. He pays his worker Taka 400 a month. Nazir who comes from Sadarkhana in Noakhali earns about Taka 4,000 a month. He says that it all goes to the education of his two teenage boys, savings for his daughter's impending marriage and general day to day expenses at home.

Nazir has no savings either in a bank or a co-operative. He has no insurance to talk of. He plods through life and concentrates on pleasing his customers, who pay for his travel expenses of Tk 10 or Tk 5, as is required. Sometimes the ladies of Dhanmondi are kind enough to offer him a cup of tea too, but this is not often. Handing over the goods and collecting the remunerations, listening to nagging complaints, and getting the once in a blue moon praise, comprises his day's work.

While Nazir is afraid of his competitors, he has his homefront to also safeguard. He does not like it if his wife Saira feels that the four "saris", that he normally gives her every year, are not up to the mark, or are inferior to those of the other women in the neighbourhood shack in Jhikatola. When the wife carries on ad lib, about not providing enough money for the sets of trousers and shirts for the sons, for not paying the school fees in time, or for not saving enough for the dowry of the daughter Ruhiza, he is naturally not amused.

The washer-man or the "dhobi", as he is better known in Dhaka, has little time for gossip and tattle in the form of "adda", and abides by his father's instruction of reading the Quran, and saying his "namaz". Not all his acquaintances or friends think highly of this habit of his, and would have preferred him to

join in a hand of cards, or "the special 'bidas' that make you 'high'". They would like him to go with them for the occasion Bangladeshi film or the "jatra", such as at Kamalapur, but he shrugs it all off.

There are places that he could go to watch imported video films in Old Dhaka, at a reasonable price, along with his co-mates, but he is preoccupied with saving the last Taka for his wife and children. He does smoke and has the occasional "paan" to relax himself and give him some respite, but he grudges himself even that. He knows of his friends who flirt with the neighbouring maids, who are compliant enough. Nazir too is tempted. He is not an angel, but he has his conscience to

Cooperation to ensure rule of law sought

Minister for Law and Justice Mirza Golam Hafiz Sunday stressed the need for creating social awareness against price hike to protect consumers' rights, reports BSS.

He was addressing as chief guest a seminar organised by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) to mark the World Consumers' Rights Day at the National Press Club Sunday afternoon.

Jatiya Sangsad Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain, Minister for Fisheries, Livestock, Forest and Environment Abdullah Al Noman, Opposition Chief Whip and Awami League Leader Mohammad Nasim, Independent MP Nurul Islam Moni, National Board of Revenue member Shah Abul Hannan and Cab General Secretary Sarwar Zahan spoke on the occasion. CAB President Borhan Ahmed presided.

The Minister for Law and Justice sought the cooperation of all to fight against social vices and ensure rule of law in the country. Violence is impeding the economic development, he said, adding "We have to boost production to help build a self-reliant Bangladesh."

The Jatiya Sangsad Chief Whip stressed the need for national consensus to solve the major problems in the country. He sought the cooperation of the opposition political parties in this regard.

The Opposition Chief Whip and Awami League Leader assured the leaders of the democratically elected government that his party would cooperate and help reduce the escalating prices and would help solve major problems to minimise the sufferings of the people.

The Minister for Environment stressed the need for a social movement to protect the rights of the consumers.

Dainik Desh employees, newsmen rally Mar 18

Journalists and employees of the Dainik Desh will hold a joint rally at its office on March 18 at 11 am to demand payment of outstanding salaries for one year and other dues, reports UNB.

The Bengali daily has long closed. Dainik Desh Karmachari Union Sunday asked all members to attend the rally.

Arms recovered

CHITTAGONG, Mar 15: Members of Bangladesh security forces recovered some arms and ammunition from a hideout of tribal insurgents at Lakkhichhari upazila of Khagrachhari hill district this morning, BSS reports.

According to an official source here, in a special tip-off the security personnel raided the camp and found two pistols, four high powered grenade, one country-made gun and three pairs of uniform of the tribal insurgents.

Monday

- 5.00 Opening announcement Al-Quran, Programme summary
- 5.10 News in Bangla
- 5.20 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5.30 Cartoon: The Great Space Coaster
- 5.50 Shikhhangon: Programme on education
- 6.30 Debate
- 7.05 News in Bangla
- 8.00 Apanar Shashthya: Programme on health
- 8.30 Barnali: Songs
- 9.00 News in English
- 10.00 Film: Rescue
- 11.15 Khabar/The News
- 11.25 Tuesday's programme summary
- 11.30 Closing

Weather

Rain, gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or shower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka and Khulna divisions and the regions of Pabna, Bogra, Jessore, Comilla and Sylhet during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Sunday, according to Meteorological office.

Weather will remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country. Day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius during the period.

Weather may deteriorate during the subsequent two days, Met office also forecast.

The Sun sets in Dhaka today (Monday) at 6-08 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 6-06 am.

Temperature and humidity recorded in important cities and towns on Sunday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	33.1	22.8	79	54
Chittagong	30.1	23.0	95	65
Rajshahi	36.5	18.5	77	65
Khulna	34.7	23.3	81	45
Barisal	32.8	24.0	87	73
Cox's Bazar	30.2	21.4	89	73
Sylhet	30.5	20.0	82	80
Dinajpur	34.0			

Problems should be resolved through consensus: Samad

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad Sunday called for upholding democracy through the spirit of the Liberation War, reports BSS.

As a first step to achieve such objectives the nation must get rid of terrorism and the national problems should be resolved through consensus, he told a seminar on "Secularism is not negation to religion: Bangabandhu" at the National Book Centre in Dhaka.

Organised by "Joy Bangla Sangskritik Jote" in celebration of the 72nd birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the seminar was addressed, among others, by Dr SA Malek, General Secretary of Bangabandhu Parishad, Journalist Alhaj Shams-ul-Huda, Moulana Abdul Awal, President of Awami Ulema Party, Prof. Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Senior Vice-president of City Awami League, Ali Ahmed, President, Joy Bangla Shilpi Goshai, and Sheikh Abdul Quader, Member Secretary of Joy Bangla Sangskritik Parishad.

Abdus Samad Azad strongly defended the principle of secularism and said even after the birth of Pakistan its founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah had stated in the then constituent assembly of Pakistan that irrespective of religion all are Pakistanis although the country became independent on the basis of two nation theory. He said Awami League had always kept religion above all with full respect and that was why he added, Bangabandhu had established Islamic

Foundation and prohibited race, alcohol and gambling. Azad said the spirit behind the secularism was to stop the practice of exploiting religion for selfish political end by misleading people.

The deputy Leader of the Opposition pleaded for independence of judiciary and said his party had already submitted a bill in parliament in this regard.

He expressed the hope that the government would demonstrate its gesture to pass the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill the way the Opposition had supported the government for the passage of 12th Constitutional Amendment Bill.

SA Malek urged all to work unitedly to promote the principle of secularism which he added, was aimed at stopping the bad practice of using religion in politics to mislead the masses.

Referring to the election of Prof Golam Azam as the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami he said, "This was done deliberately to throw a challenge to the freedom fighters".

Shamsul Huda said the nation had witnessed how the vested quarters used religion for their selfish political ends. Moulana Abdul Awal said secularism was a must for democracy. He said the people irrespective of religion had fought the Liberation War.



Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad seen speaking at a discussion meeting Sunday organised by the Joy Bangla Sangskritik Oikkyajote in observance of the 72nd birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the National Book Centre Auditorium. — Star photo



Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz addressing a seminar on the World Consumers' Right Day on Sunday organised by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh at the National Press Club auditorium. Minister for Environment, Forests, Fishery and Livestock Abdullah Al-Noman (extreme right), CAB President Borhan Ahmed (second from left) and Opposition Chief Whip in Parliament Mohammad Nasim were also present. — Star photo

'Certain quarter distorting history of Bangladesh'

Speaker Shaikh Razaque All Sunday urged the forerunners of Language Movement to come out with real history of the movement and also to give the nation guidelines to institutionalize democracy, reports BSS.

He regretted that attempts were being made to distort the history and the truth of the Language Movement to establish oneself in society.

The Speaker called for presenting a complete and true history before the future generation instead of indulging in self-deception.

Shaikh Razaque was addressing as Chief Guest a discussion meeting held in memory of the "Historic State Language Agreement Day-15 March, 1948" at the auditorium of National Museum.

Jointly organised by the Language Movement Council and the State Language Agreement Day Observance Council, the function was addressed, among others, by Dewan Mohammad Azfar, Prof. Shamsul Huq, Chairman,

University Grants Commission, Mahbub Anam, Editor Bangladesh Times, Dr. Nurul Huq Bhuiyan, Shamsul Alam, Mustafa Kamal, MA Mohaimen, Dr. Mirza Mozharul Islam, Rafiqul Islam Jaglu, member DUCSU, and Zulfikar Rahman, President, Moulana Bhashani Smriti Student Sangsad.

Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury presided over the meeting.

The discussants regretted that those who had contributed largely to the language movement were now being ignored. They said a particular quarter was out to disrupt democracy by misinterpreting the history and regretted that the history of all democratic movements of the past, including that of the Language Movement and the war of independence, were being distorted by that quarter.

Shaikh Razaque said it would be very unfortunate if we would fail to present the real history before the nation and said the history of the Language Movement would not

be complete without recognising the contribution of Dr. Shahidullah, Principal Abul Kashem and Abul Mansur Ahmed.

He said the nation was now passing through a critical juncture and urged the pioneers of the Language Movement, which in fact started in 1948, to play an effective role to consolidate democracy.

The Speaker urged all quarters to show respect to others opinions, use the language of democracy and learn from other's criticism to give democracy a sound footing.

Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury said the pioneers of the language movement should be given national recognition as they had played a courageous role at that time risking their lives. He also touched on the recent wave of movements and said efforts were on to destabilise the democratic government by making non-issue an issue.

Dewan Mohammad Azfar said the language movement had started with the activities of 'Tamaddun Majlis', the language movement had led to the country's War of Liberation, he said.

Prof. Shamsul Huq said the attempts of those who were trying to distort history would not be successful.

Mahbub Anam regretted that the real pioneers of the Language Movement were not seen in the programmes of television and Bangla Academy.

He said the country's cultural arena was now in the grip of a sort of cultural bureaucrats.

'War of Liberation never ends'

Deputy Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury Sunday called for united endeavours of all being imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War to remove injustice and exploitation from the society, reports BSS.

"War of Liberation never ends but it continues always against the social injustice," he said while addressing as the chief guest the publication ceremony of a drama titled "Akhono Ora" at the Guide House Auditorium here.

Eminent journalist and Chairman of the Dainik Bangla Trustee Board Abaidul Huq, speaking as the special guest, said drama was now taking a rebellious stand against all social injustices. He said drama was also showing the mankind the way to a sound life.

Motdur Rahman Rana wrote the drama focusing on various social injustices and discrimination.

Swarabithi Theatre organised the ceremony while its President Mohammad Ali Sujan presided.

124 held on various charges

The police arrested 124 persons from different parts of the city on various charges Saturday, reports BSS.

The police in cooperation with people arrested two wanted persons from Uttarkhan area under Uttara police station that evening and recovered one foreign revolver with two rounds of ammunition, a DMP press release said yesterday (Sunday).

The arrested persons were Sihak (25) and Shaheen (22). The police recovered the revolver from the possession of Sihak.

Meanwhile Kotwali police arrested one person, identified as Harun (25) from Nalgola, Midfort Balur Ghat area and recovered five bombs and five sharp knives (Kirish). He was suspiciously moving in the area with a rickshaw.

The arrested persons were sent to court, the DMP press release added.

Happy Birthday
to
Waheed Bhai
From
The Daily Star

MISSING

Bangladesh breed female dog, well groomed, missing since February 21, 1992 from Rd. No. 15a, Dhanmandi, colour light brown-white, name Alu. High reward for informations leading to recovery of the dog. Contact Tel. 501879 during office hours. German Cultural Centre.

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