

Dhaka Day by Day

The Abstemious Busybody

by S. Bari

This is a month of abstinence: from food, from drink, and, it seems, from minding your own business. The latter has never been a strong point in the Bengali psyche, and Ramadan clears the way for the incurably inquisitive to violate your privacy to their heart's content. There is a carefully-laid strategy that combines self-righteousness, a holier-than-thou attitude, and simple curiosity. Read on for a lesson.

You reach for the perfect break in your endless work-day, a sip of the cup of tea on your desk, when an uninvited comment shatters your equanimity. "Tea on a day of fasting!" exclaims your abstemious colleague, with whom (till now) you have had a purely professional relationship.

The above colleague kills two birds with one stone: not only are you made to feel as if you've been caught committing some unspeakable crime, you are also deprived of that much-awaited sip of tea. Both of which cause

you to feel something definitely not brotherly love towards your assailant (hardly a commendable emotion in this holy month).

"Not fasting?" The question is accompanied by an insincere smile and surprised eyebrows. First possible translation: "Shame on you", which is a highly objectionable reaction, like the restaurants that serve food before 11am only to non-Muslims. Second possible translation: "How dare you eat while I'm starving?" In this case the speaker is fasting more for show than for the salvation of his soul. This brings us to the crux of the matter.

There are those who fast because they believe in it, which is more than admirable. Then

there are those who fast because it looks good, both in terms of social approbation and of weight loss. This is less than admirable. The latter group is distinguished by their tireless efforts to discover the Ramadan habits of others.

Why one should lurk behind curtains and closed doors in order to grab a bite remains one of the mysteries of our society. I might

with reason have compunctions about snacking in the midst of the poor or starving, but it is too much to heap guilt on me for eating while my fasting friends look on. Those who fast do so (hopefully) of their own free will and (ideally) with strong conviction. Instead of remembering this, we look sheepish when we bump into people in restaurants, and smile at each other like accomplices in a bank robbery.

The nosiness that proliferates during Ramadan is surely not something the Prophet had in mind. Not only have we devised a complex machinery to provoke guilt, some modern-day inquisitors go so far as to ask why you are not fasting.

This is like a separate questionnaire. If you are fasting, please tick 'yes'. If not, please tick one or more of the reasons below (illness, travel...). As far as I know, the government is the only one committed to accountability around here; nowhere in the Constitution does it say that I am accountable to my curious colleague.

Unfortunately, we take refuge in excuses: I am away from home, I have exams, I have to take my antibiotics, I'm not a Muslim. How about simply, "None of your business?"



World Met Day March 23

World Meteorology Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world on March 23, reports UNB.

This year's theme is "meteorology and hydrological services for sustainable development."

Met office in Dhaka has taken up an elaborate programme to mark the day.

Secretary, Science and Technology Division Hishamuddin Ahmed will inaugurate the day's programme at the Met office at 10 in the morning.

The inaugural session will be followed by technical sessions where research scientists are expected to present papers on different aspects weather situation.

A day long exhibition of meteorology instrument will also be organised on the occasion.

Explaining the importance of this year's theme, the Met office Director Hamiduzzaman Khan Chowdhury told UNB that weather situation should be taken into consideration before taking up any development plan for sustainable growth of the country's economy.

He said, "We may not prevent the natural disasters but we can at least save life and property by disaster forecast."

Former student leaders support Azam's trial

By Staff Correspondent

Sixty-two former student leaders in a statement Friday extended alout support and solidarity to the proposed public trial of Jamaat leader Golam Azam on March 26.

The statement criticized the government for its 'mysterious' silence on this issue, saying the trial of Golam Azam in the people's court was obvious as the government took no measures in this regard.

The former student leaders said the insolence of Jamaat-e-Islami has reached such a state that it did not hesitate to elect the 'notorious' Golam Azam the Ameer of the party. They termed it a threat to the spirit and values of the Liberation War and said no conspiracy could hinder the proposed public trial of Golam Azam.

They termed the initiative of the National Coordination Committee for Annihilation of the Killers and Collaborators of 1971 to prosecute Golam Azam and all war criminals 'timely' and called upon all to make the trial a success.

The student leaders who signed the statement include among others Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, K M Jahangir, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Abdur Rahman, Habibur Rahman, Md Taher Ullah, Shirin Akhtar, Mustaq Hossain, Baharul Maznun Chonnu, Mukul Bose, Nurul Fazul Bulbul, Enayetur Rahim, Mostafa Faruq, Bazlur Rashid Firoz, Fazle Hossain Badsha, Jahiruddin Swapan, Akhtaruzzaman, Maruf Chinu, Mostafa Banarjee, Abul Hossain, Akhtar Sobhan Masnur, Sujauddin Jafar, Faizul Hakim Lala, Ashrafur Huq Mukul, Syed Jahangir, Mirajul Islam Abbasi, Saifuddin Mont, Anil Chandra Maron, Himanshu Singh and Abed Raja.

Jewel Aich accorded reception

Magician Jewel Aich was accorded a reception in the city Friday for his completion of 20 years on the stage, reports BSS.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum attended the reception as the chief guest.

Deputy Minister for Health Sirajul Haque and Deputy Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Abdul Hai were present on the occasion.

The reception was organised by Bangladesh Samaj Kalyan Karmi Sangha.

TV Saturday Special Session

- 3:45 am Opening announcement
- 4:00 am 5th World Cup Cricket: New Zealand vs Pakistan
- Evening Session**
- 5:00 Opening announcement, Al-Quran, Programme summary
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:20 Recitation from the Triptak
- 5:30 Sports World
- 5:50 Mahey Ramzan
- 6:00 Mati O Manush
- 7:05 Bansharee
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:30 Probaha
- 9:30 Uzzebbon
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Drama series: Dalias
- 11:15 Khabar/The News
- 11:25 Sunday's programme summary and
- 11:30 Closing



Children taking part in a painting competition jointly organised by the Health Education Bureau and Shishu Academy in the academy premises Friday.

100 babies becoming blind everyday

At least 100 babies in Bangladesh are becoming blind everyday due to 'vitamin A deficiency and about 90,000 children have already been suffering from night blindness, reports BSS.

This was contained in a key-note paper presented at a seminar on 'Primary Eye Care and Prevention of Nutritional Blindness' held at the Bangladesh Lions Foundation Auditorium in the city Friday.

M A Mannan and Safia Akhter of Bangladesh National Nutrition Council prepared the key-note paper for the seminar.

In their paper they said about 500,000 babies of the 6-71 months age group were among the total night blinds in the country and 50 per cent of them die in a few days.

They also said the rate of night blindness due to the 'vitamin A' deficiency had surpassed the level specified by the World Health Organisation and the trend in Bangladesh was higher than that in any part of the world.

M A Mannan and Safia Akhter in their paper said 45 per cent of the total population was under 15 years of age and 25 per cent under five years of age. 35 per cent of them taken together are suffering from serious malnutrition and whoever survives becomes a liability to the whole society, they said in the paper.

Speaking on the occasion as

the chief guest, Deputy Leader of parliament AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury stressed the need for coordinated efforts of the government.

Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and physicians to combat this menacing problem of blindness in the country.

The solution to such a problem is possible if these three vital forces work together under mutual cooperation," he said.

Organised by Bangladesh Lions Foundation, the seminar was also addressed, among others, by Ln Tauhidur Rahman, Council Chairman of the multiple district 315, Dr SM Munirul Huq, Chief Consultant of Lions Eye Hospital and Feona Doby, Project Coordinator of a child care and anti blindness project in Bangladesh.

Prof Chowdhury, who is a renowned physician advised all to change the traditional food habit and take foods like potatoes, sweet potatoes and various kinds of vegetables rich in vitamin A.

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury called upon the parents to take proper care of their children, especially in case of cutting nails and keeping hands always clean from dirt.

He said 95 per cent of the children were suffering from worms in their stomach and these worms eat up 30 per cent of the food in takes. These worms are the creation

of the dirt of nails and hands of the children, he added.

Feona Doby said green vegetables are nature's bounty in Bangladesh but the people cannot eat those because of poverty and ignorance about these valuable foods.

"Increasing number of babies are not getting mothers' milk because mothers do not get nutritional food," she said adding, that was why the kids were often attacked by diseases like blindness.

Ln governors of both 315-A and 315-B Ln M Anwarul Haq and Ln Shahjahan Khadem, Lioness and Leos were present at the seminar. Lns Hosne Ara Khan was in the chair.

Canal digging to help attain self-sufficiency in food

LGRD and Cooperative Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder Friday formally inaugurated the reexcavation project of 1326.22 metre long Zia canal in Nagarpur upazila of Tangail district, reports UNB.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion, Talukder said that with the completion of this project, a large area of adjacent paddy lands would come under irrigation facilities.

As a result, he said, production of food would increase to a great extent immensely benefiting a large number of farmers. "It will also help navigation, storage of water in dry season and remove water-logging during flood."

The Minister called upon the people to make the canal digging programme a success with their spontaneous participation to make the country self-sufficient in food.

Mirpur section-2 in grip of criminals

Shialbari at Mirpur section-2 in the city is in the grip of criminals, local people complained, reports UNB.

Several groups of muscle-men are allegedly involved in hijacking, robbery, extracting money and harassing women in broad day light.

The "known miscreants," wanted in connection with criminal cases, move freely with arms even at the very nose of the law enforcers, the residents alleged.

Residents claimed they had drawn the attention of the law enforcing authorities to the problem on many occasions but to no avail. Police had arrested many of the criminals who, however, managed to get released, they said.

Student bodies support Golam Azam's trial

By DU Correspondent

The leaders of the 17 student organisations Friday in a statement expressed solidarity with the ongoing movement against Golam Azam and supported his public trial.

The statement was issued by the Awami League backed Chhatra League (S-A), the Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO), a left-leaning eight party students alliance and some other student organisations' leaders.

The statement was signed by the student leaders Shahe Alam, President Chhatra League (S-A), Shafee Ahmed, General Secretary JSD (Inu) backed Chhatra League (N-S), Nasir-ud-Doza, President Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Belal Chowdhury, President Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Bidhan Roy, President Ganatantrik Chhatra Union, Uday Pal, GS Bangladesh Chhatra Federation, Aminul Islam, President Bangladesh Chhatra Samity, Suranjana Ghosh, JS Jatya Chhatra League, Abdus Sattar Khan, President Chhatra League (S-S), Raju Ahmed, Joint Convener Ganatantrik Chhatra Kendra, Noor Ahmed Bakul, President Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree, Moshrefa Mishu, Convener Chhatra Oikya Forum (Mishu), Abu Akber Iqbal Joint

Convener, Jatya Chhatra Oikya, Zayed Iqbal Khan, GS Chhatra Oikya Forum (Zayed), Mokhesur Rahman Shahin, Biplobi Chhatra Sangha, Salauddin Tarun, Convener Ganatantrik Chhatra League, Monsurul Hie Subhan, President Jatya Chhatra Dal, The Ganatantrik Chhatra

Oikya (GCO) will hold rallies across the country on March 23 in support of the trial of Golam Azam on March 26.

In a statement served Friday the GCO announced its central programme. On March 23 the GCO will hold a rally in front of the National Press Club at 11 in the morning.

What's on today . . .

United Nations Association of Bangladesh

In observance of International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination The United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) will organise a symposium today (Saturday) at 4.30 pm at the auditorium of the United Nations Information Centre, House No 25, Road No 11 (Old Road No 32), Dhanmondi.

Ambassador Farooq Sobhan, Acting Foreign Secretary, will be the chief guest, while Charles Larsson, Resident Representative of UNDP and Director, UNIC will be guest speaker.

Training course on fire fighting

A week-long training course on "Security and Fire Fighting" will be inaugurated today (Saturday) at 9.30 am at Rapport Seminar Hall in 98 Malibagh (DIT road).

Sponsored by Rapport Bangladesh Limited, the course will be participated by security personnel of various organisations of public and private sectors.

Rotary Club of Uttara

The weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Uttara will be held today (Saturday) at 5.00 pm at the residence of club President, House-21, Road-3, Sector-3, Uttara.

Rtn PDG A Mannan, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism will speak on "Role of Rotary in Community Development."

Lions Club of Dhaka Progoti

The regular meeting and Iftar party of Lions Club of Dhaka Progoti will be held today (Saturday) at 4.00 pm at Sonargaon Hotel.

Ln Gautam Saha will preside over the meeting.

Weather

Rain with gusty wind likely

By Staff Correspondent

Met office forecasts Friday that the rain or thundershower accompanied with gusty wind is likely at one or two places over the regions of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Tangail, Pabna, Bogra, Comilla and Sylhet during the next 24 hours till 6 pm Saturday.

Weather may, however, remain mainly dry elsewhere across the country, Met office added.

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

Friday's highest temperature was recorded at Rajshahi (34 degree Celsius) and lowest temperature recorded at Rangpur (18 degree Celsius).

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 6:10 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 6:01 am.

Temperature and humidity recorded in important cities and towns Friday are:

	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.0	23.4	82	62
Chittagong	29.8	21.8	78	58
Rajshahi	34.0	23.3	81	53
Khulna	31.8	22.0	85	nil
Cox's Bazar	30.2	21.5	75	77
Sylhet	29.6	18.5	100	70
Faridpur	31.1	21.0	87	62
Rangpur	29.6	18.0	80	63
Dinajpur	31.0	19.4	77	64
Jessore	32.0	22.5	nil	nil

Shantibahini abducts 4

RANGAMATI, Mar 20: Four people including the Headmaster of Panchari High School of the district have been abducted by the tribal insurgents, reports UNB.



Child found

By Staff Correspondent

A lost child was found in front of the Azampur Graveyard on March 14 at about 8 am.

He identified himself as Montu and said that he hailed from Noakhali. He could not say any more about himself.

He is now under the care of Md Shahjahan Khandakar (37/1, Azampur Road, Dhaka-1205).



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