

RISING STARS

PAHELA BAISHAKH AND A DREAM

by Dipak Kumar Karmaker

THE Bengali year 1398 has come to an end and we have stepped into the threshold of 1399. Pahela Baishakh has highly significant bearings on the Bengali nation. Bengali calendar is essentially founded on the natural phenomena occurring in Bangladesh which has its specific geographical features. Here we should remember that originally the culture of a nation is derived from the interplay of its people and nature. Thus Bengali calendar is deeply connected with Bengali culture and civilization. Here lies the special import of Pahela Baishakh. It is the day when the whole Bengali nation becomes aware of the cultural ties that incorporates people into a nation.

And this great national consciousness is mirrored in the way people observe the day. At about 7 am people, specially young boys and girls, collect at the Ramna Batamul. The men usually plet on Panjabi and Pajama, while the women Dhaka, Jamdani, Tangali or Garad sarees. What is noteworthy is that every one uses things which are indigenous. At Ramna Batamul, different cultural organizations present musical programmes. Famous among them is Chhayano, a Bengali cultural organization.

They usually render Tagore, Nazrul and patriotic songs. But one particular song which is sung like a refrain, deserves mention here and it is Tagore's Esho He Baishakh Esho Esho (Welcome Baishakh). The song is an address to the month of

Baishakh. The advent of Baishakh is naturally accompanied with violent storms and thunders. The song appeals to Baishakh to come with its storms to wash away all the rubbish deposited by the past, and pave the way for a fresh future.

Musical and poetic programmes are also held at

try. People show an attitude which implies that they are ready to do anything for the good of the country.

From very early morning, people start pouring into Ramna Batamul. At about 9 am, when the functions here end, people move towards Suhrawardy Udyan, Bangla Academy or Shishu

Fair is also held at Shishu Academy. On the other hand, the students of the Art College observe the day quite gorgeously. They arrange colourful feasts, and wear colourful masks. New books are also published on the day. They throw light on Bengali culture and literature.

Pahela Baishakh has significance both on the individual and national levels. On the day, every Bengali looks forward to the fructification of his hopes. On the other hand, congregation at the public places exhibits national awareness. This is the day when people should resolve to work in a body for the good of the country. It is true that the misery of the condition prevailing in our country, is infinite. Even so, we should not lose hope. Let us for a while sacrifice our individual interest at the altar of the abstraction called Bengali nationalism.

"My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful darning of a moment's surrender

Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed."

It we can rise above all meanness arising out of our egoistic pride, the dawn of Pahela Baishakh will usher in the days of a new civilization. Amid thousands of deaths and diseases, we can sing —
"If Winter comes, —
Spring be far behind!"



Traditional welcoming of 'Pahela Baishakh' at Ramna

Suhrawardy Udyan. People attend fair held at Bangla Academy. On Pahela Baishakh, Panta Bhat (boiled rice steeped in cold water), Pittha (cake) and hilsa fish (our national fish) are sold at Ramna Batamul.

Though they are sold at a very high price, people, nevertheless, buy and relish them in order to show regard for the commodities of our own coun-

(children's) Academy. There is a breath of festivity in the whole environment. It is quite amusing to note that as Ramna Batamul is overflows with people, some youngsters climb on the trees to watch the programmes.

Opposite to Bangla Academy, a poetic session is held, in which local poets recite their own poetry. This too attracts a lot of people.

How to be more popular

by Sagheer Bin Faiz

To all the boys reading this article, this is not a Charles Atlas guide to building up your muscles and to all the girls reading this, its not a Vidal Sassoon guide to beauty. Its about building up what really counts—personality.

There are many ways to improve yourself and be a better person. You look at all the very popular people around you and you wonder what makes them so popular. One does not necessarily have to be gifted with exceptional good looks. By popular people, I refer to those about whom few have a bad word not the sort of people everyone sucks up to and then criticize behind their backs.

People with a superiority complex are seldom high on the popularity list. No one likes to hear a person brag about how great hope she is and no one likes that "I'm the greatest and I'm superior to everyone" — attitude. If you are very good in what you do, its obvious by itself. There's no point in flaunting it around. People often prefer a certain degree of modesty.

On the other hand, people at the other extreme that is, people with inferiority complexes aren't looked at favourably, no one likes you to have low self esteem and think that you are so low down that no one would bother to be friend you or that no girl or

boy would fall for you. This sort of attitude tends to make a person cling on like a spineless jellyfish to other people, and often, he/she is looked upon like a doormat.

Another very unpopular habit that some people have is the tendency to make snide remarks about others. They think it's "Oh-so-cool" to point out others faults or laugh about their weaknesses, making them the butt of their jokes. But this makes them more despicable and they eventually hang around with other backbiters of their sort.

A lot of people have the habit of forcing themselves on you always trying to be around you and end up being a pest even of their intentions are good. You should know when you are wanted and quietly slip away when you know the people near you aren't feeling comfortable with you around.

Try to keep a leash on your temper. Some of the most popular people I know seem to be perturbed by nothing. They're eternally calm and never get fired up though it's hard to maintain your calm all the time, you should try not to let little things upset you and learn to cope better under pressure.

Writing this article has helped me understand my deficiencies better. Hopefully, reading it will do the same for you.



"Mama, what's an incubator?" five-year-old Igor wants to know. After listening to an explanation he exclaims: "Oh, I see. It's an electrical hen."

Sasha was looking out of the window at the Moon. "Papa, did the cosmonauts turn the Moon's light on?"

Mila asked her parents: "Were you very happy when I was born?" "Of course," answer her mother. "What did I say?" "You said: 'Hello, Mama and Papa.'" "You mean Granny wasn't home when I was born?"

Three-year-old Anya asks: "Mama, do we lock our apartment door at night?" "Of course." "Then how do my dreams get in?"

"Do you want a piece of candy, Gran?" asked Yulia. "No, thank you, sweetheart." Yulia was silent a few moments and then said: "Ask me now. Maybe I want one."

While helping Serezha put on his socks, Granny said: "Serezha has different feet, one left and one right." "Don't worry, Granny. Some children are like that."

A dog came running up to Marina while she was playing outside. The little girl's mother rushed to her side, but Marina was unperturbed: "Don't be afraid. It wasn't going to bite me. It just wanted to taste me with his tongue."

by Tatyana Gennadieva

The Rising Stars wish all of you a very happy Easter



(Card by Josephine Sarkar)

Mystery at Mandrake

by Munazah Alam

Our heroes are thinking of climbing trees to get to the other side. But there are guards all over the place. Will they be spotted... will they solve the Mystery at Mandrake...

"We can't do anything now. We'll try those trees after dark."

After that we did a little snooping and then Chris drove us back to Marlow. There, after lunch, we made plans for the oncoming evening. This didn't take long as it was clear to both of us what we had to do without putting it to words; but we had to wait for cons before it finally grew dark. Telling Mrs Jameson where we were going and why, we set out for Woking for the second time that day.

This time, in addition to the other precautions, we also took some rope and penknives with us.

It was quite dark by the time we reached Woking. The sky was still overcast, so it was even darker as there was no moon.

We approached Humphrey's Cottage from the back. The three-storeyed building loomed up like a black giant against the lighter shade of the cloudy sky. Except for a few rooms the house was in complete darkness.

When we were close enough Chris took out a coin from her pocket and tossed it against the fence. It fell off with a thud.

"What did you do that for?" I asked Chris, wondering what she was up to.

"To see whether the fence is electrified or not, twit." "Oh — of course!"

Silently the two of us walked along the fence, round to the front. What a pity, I thought looking at a tree, that tree is the easiest to climb and it's right beside a lamp!

So, having no choice, we had to try our luck on one of the more difficult-to-climb trees, which was the farthest from the lamp but closest to the gates. Luckily, this one was in complete darkness and nobody would be able to see us

unless they were watching very closely, which I doubted very much. And I was right because, within a few minutes, Chris and I were on the other side of the fence with the help of the rope we had brought with us. We tied this rope to a stable branch and left it dangling on our side of the fence. We would need it to get ourselves out of there.

Cautiously, very cautiously, so as not to step on twigs or anything that would give us away, we inched our way towards the 'cottage'. We were approaching it from the front. As far as I could see the whole first floor was in darkness. But a few lights were still on in the upper two floors.

It would be too dangerous to try entering the house through the front door. Slowly and carefully we walked round to the back. But to our dismay we saw that the lights of the room into which the backdoor opened were on! Well, we certainly couldn't get in through there! We would have to be cleverer this time. There hadn't been any sign of a third door when we had come round to the back, and upon investigation, we found that there wasn't any entrance on the fourth side either! Strange, only two entrances for so large a building? Or had they been sealed?

By now we had circled the entire building, Chris began to retrace our footsteps, this time a little nearer the house; I followed.

I forgot Chris' warning to watch where I was going. I looked around to try and locate any possible entrance by which we could obtain access into Humphrey's Cottage, and in doing so, I tripped over something and fell flat on my face.

I lay still as a statue in that position and Chris followed suit, both of us expecting a window to open at any moment and a head to poke out. But nothing happened.

"You idiot!" Chris said fiercely. "Watch where you're going!"

To be continued

A Quick-Witted Person

THERE was once a destitute man called Tong who one day happened to meet another young man, also named Tong. Having chatted with one another, Big Tong and Small Tong decided to become friends and help one another earn a living. Small Tong suggested that Big Tong become a monk. Big Tong hesitated at first, but later agreed when Small Tong insisted that his monkhood would only be a means of living. Having found a deserted temple, Big Tong had his head shaved, donned a yellow robe, and led the life of a bogus monk there.

Small Tong, meanwhile, went about from village to village, stealing cattle from the villagers, and reporting back to the Venerable Tong about what he had done. Small Tong told the villagers that there was a monk who was a true crystal ball gazer and could tell them where to look for the lost cattle. The villagers, disheartened at having lost their cattle, went to ask the Venerable Tong where to find them. The Venerable Tong, pretending to draw a few lines on a slate, told each villager where to find his cattle. The villagers would then go into the forest and find the cattle as foretold by the monk. They were very pleased. As a token of gratitude, they showered the monk with all kinds of gifts.

One day the governor of the land lost his diamond ring. He sent his aide to ask the Venerable Tong to locate it. When the aide told him what had happened, Tong was panic-stricken, thinking he would soon be in trouble, and cursed himself. "Your day has come, Tong. No one can help you now." Now the name of the aide who came to ask Tong to find the governor's diamond ring was also Tong. When he heard the Venerable Tong's curses, he was frightened and turned very pale. He cried and confessed that he was the one who had stolen the governor's diamond ring. To redeem himself, he told the Venerable Tong where to find the ring and asked him to help save his life. The Venerable Tong was pleased that luck had come his

way again. He hurried to the governor and told him where to find the ring, but declined to identify the culprit, claiming that as a monk he had to be kind. The governor raised no objection.

When the ring was found, the monk was rewarded with valuable gifts and a sumptuous meal. The Venerable Tong was so pleased that he gobbled down the food very fast. As a result, a chicken bone got stuck in his throat. He felt embarrassed to bring it out, as the governor was present there, leaning against a pillar. All he could do was to move his head up and down. The governor thought he was calling him. No sooner had he moved to approach the Venerable Tong than thunder struck the pillar against which he had been leaning. The thunder frightened the Venerable Tong so much that he swallowed the chicken bone and became unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he told the governor that he had a premonition that thunder was going to strike the pillar. That is why he signed to him to move away from there. The governor was so pleased that he invited the Venerable Tong to stay at the royal temple.

One day a cobra got into the pond in the palace grounds. No one dared to use water from that pond. The governor asked for Tong's help. Being frightened himself, Tong peeped

into the pond to see how big the cobra was. Unfortunately, he slipped and fell into the water. In panic he grasped whatever was at hand. When he regained composure, he realized that he was holding the cobra's neck.

Stories of Tong's heroic

control and slipped from its back, dangling under the seat. His two feet which were tied together, were seen pointing upwards. The enemies had never seen anyone riding a horse in that position. They thought that the Venerable Tong was using black magic to kill them. They ran helter-skelter in different directions. Victory then belonged to the Venerable Tong. After being helped to sit upright on the



deed spread far and wide. Soon after this, enemies besieged the town. The governor asked Tong to lead the army in combat. Tong did not know how to ride a horse. To prevent him from falling off of the horse, Small Tong tied the Venerable Tong's feet together under the horse stomach. When the horse started to gallop, the Venerable Tong lost

horse, he explained that by hanging his head down, he was trying to avoid the enemies' black magic and, at the same time, was using his own black magic to drive them away. This victory won the Venerable Tong a great deal of fame.

Tale from Laughing Together — a Unesco publication

QUIZ CLUB

Here are this week's questions:

- Who first translated the 'Koran' into Bengali?
- What was the name of Jahanara Imam's son, killed in the War of Liberation?
- Name six of the members of the Gano Adalat.
- Which president allowed Jamaat-e-Islami to re-operate in Bangladesh after it was banned?
- In which year was 'Amar Sonar Bangla' written?
- What did Satyajit Ray win an Oscar for?
- When was the previous influx of Rohingyas into Bangladesh?
- Who first correctly guessed the circumference of the Earth?
- What was the subject of Demosthenes' famous oration?
- How does soap help remove dirt?

The answers to Quiz Club of 17th April are:

- Girish Chandra
- Rumi
- Jahanara Imam, Aly Zakar, Kalim Sharafi, Syed Shamsul Huq, Shaikat Ali, Nuruzzaman
- Zinur Rahman
- 1905
- Lifetime achievement and contribution to cinema
- 1978
- Erastosthenes
- Harangues against Philip of Macedonia and Alexander the Great
- By reducing water's surface tension and allowing it to penetrate the dirt.

TOM & MOM in 'BUSYBODY'

by Sanjida Shaheed Class - X



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