

Dhaka Day by Day

Superstition Still Reigns Supreme

by Sharier Khan

Lipi's husband works in the Middle East. Every month Lipi receives a handsome amount in dollars at her Shahtinagar residence. Being a lazy housewife, she saved the money at home, not in a bank. And that's where her trouble began. Somebody stole US\$ 1200 of the savings from her steel almirah.

She did not call the police. Instead, she called in a black magician, 'aina para specialist.' 'Well, I thought it was stolen by someone in the family,' she said secretly, 'so I did not call the police - it would be embarrassing if what I thought turned out to be true.'

The 'aina para' specialist, a very ordinary man of 35 years of age, claims that he can identify a thug in a mirror by using his supernatural power.

He needed a brand new mirror, a red cloth, some sweets, a person whose zodiac sign is libra and a fee of Taka two hundred," said Lipi. "So I provided him with every thing he wanted, including a cousin of mine whose zodiac sign is libra."

The cousin, Farook, a young man of 25 said, "I did not like this 'aina para' man from the beginning. He looked to be a cheat. But Lipi insisted on my joining the venture to capture the thug."

One Saturday night few months ago, the 'aina para' man along with two of his assistants, few bizarre paraphernalia and the libra-labelled cousin sat in a circle in a room of Lipi's tin-roof home.

The arrangement was a little bit unnatural. The red cloth was laid on the floor. A candle was lit. The four men sitting around the ghostly light maintained total silence for long. The libra fellow was asked to concentrate on the light and to think of a possible thug's face. "Oh to remember the day..." Farook grunted, "it was a horrible experience!" "I had to fast for the whole day to become the perfect medium for the miracle worker and when I sat in the circle I was practically threatened to remain silent no matter what happened!"

Farook was concentrating on the light and the mirror for over 20 minutes. Mosquitoes went berserk. Silence became unbearable. The hungry man used as the medium could not see a thing in the mirror except his own shadow.

"So the 'aina para' man asked me whispering, can you see any body?" I said, nothing. He insisted on my seeing somebody then. You must... you should see some face... probably a male face... of 20 years of age... may be a woman of 30 in torn saree? huh? don't you see any body? My mouth went dry. I was impatient and I wanted to get out of the room... it was terribly hot too since the fan was off!" Farook smilingly said, when the 'aina para' man was describing possible pictures to turn up in the mirror it reminded me of Lipi's younger brother who had been trying to go abroad for long and the maid servant. Naturally, Farook said, at one stage I thought I saw some one in the mirror.

So I declared hesitatingly, "...er... it is not clear... I think I saw somebody in saree in the mirror."

"Uh," he said, "I can see her too... it's the maid servant."

"But I said, I don't think so... it was not clear... may be I had not seen anything! He said of

course you did. Then somebody switched on the light and I was permitted to eat the sweets."

Lipi said, soon afterwards the miracle worker told me to check the belongings of the maid servant. If, he said, I could not find the dollar there, the maid servant must have had sold or passed the money somewhere else. I found no money at my maid servant's disposal. The 'aina para' man of course, did not wait to see if the money was found.

The maid servant, being badly treated by the members of Lipi's family, left her place soon.

Lipi's husband being informed of the whole incident scolded Lipi for being irresponsible and superstitious. Their relationship became cold. Lipi's brother realising he was ultimately suspected left his sister's shelter soon.

The 'aina para' man was not available in his den which was located in the same area. At Chankhar pool, there are a number of miracle workers who sit beside the main road in their shops like office rooms.



Fakir Md Mitu Mia, aged over 55, is among the oldest of such professionals in that row. He has been doing it for 35 years. In the tin wall of his office, an statement written on a stamp paper and attested by a lawyer in April 1975 reads:

1. I am a Fakir by profession.
2. By using bamboo chatti, lati (stick), mirror, egg and beetle leaves according to Fakiri method I can identify thieves.

3. I also treat patients who are being attacked by ghosts and genies. Or in any other thing, Channmia says, "There is no point in cheating!"

"Sometimes when we visit a victim's house," Mitu Mia's son who is an apprentice in this profession says, "our mere presence scares the thief if he's there in the house, and he starts confessing before we may start anything?" he added smilingly.

Miracle workers, they say, are hardly born, they are made. "We all have gurus who teach us Fakiri methods," Mitu's son says. "Back from the ancient days, Fakirs lived and served the people with their supernatural powers. They resented material possessions but took matters very essential for living," Chan Mia says.

The other miracle workers on that street also have such statements perhaps to make the profession look legal.

Chan Mia, 35, says, "Fakiri is not exactly a profession but a service for which there is no legal restriction. We don't need a licence to practice miracle!"

"We don't earn much from this profession," Chan Mia says, "because we don't get more than 25 cases per month."

Their rate per case is Tk 42 to Tk 82. But sometimes, if the client is very poor, they do it free of charge.

"We don't catch thief but help victims identify a thief. We know Fakiri spells. We ask for a libra among the victim's relatives and we make the person see the thief himself in mirrors on the wall of Mitu's office where a photograph of an ancient Fakir is hanging. He is now dead but still Mitu's guru. The photo, now fading with age, shows a man of 60 years of age, bearded, obese and a product of the material world, he is nude."



Mobs set fire to a car in front of Abdul Ghani Road after the rumour spread that Menon had died in the city Tuesday.



Police lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the violent mobs agitating against the attempt on Menon's life Tuesday in the city.



Jahanara Imam addressing an all-party meeting to protest attempt on Menon's life in front of GPO in the city Tuesday.

Make railway free from corruption: Oli

Communications Minister Oli, Ahmed Tuesday said railway could be a profitable organisation within a span of two years with the utmost sincerity, devotion and honest dispensation of responsibility of all railway men, reports BSS.

The minister was addressing the senior railway officials at the 'rail bhaban' Dhaka, Secretary, land, DG, Bangladesh Railway, Syed Shamim Ahsan, Additional DGs, General Managers, DIG of Railway Range Police, Divisional Railway Managers and Commandant of Railway Security Force attended the meeting.

Oli said the endeavour of the officers and staff of Bangladesh Railway in keeping the annual loss of the organisation within Tk 105 crore against Tk 180 crore, the figure apprehended earlier, has been widely acclaimed throughout the country.

He said, the annual loss and deficit could be further lessened if the efforts and endeavour go ceaselessly.

The Communications Minister asked the railway officials to take steps to make the organisation corruption free, improve the standard of services to the railway users, ensure energy and water supply in carriages, observe strict cleanliness in railway stations and on board of passenger-carriages and remove all lacuna in goods booking and transportation.

Oli said, unauthorised stoppage and travelling without ticket must be stopped, rewarding the good people and punishing to the bad must be introduced and ticket checking should be more request and sudden.

HERE and THERE

Muktijoddha Kalyan Kendra

A meeting of the Muktijoddha Kalyan Kendra was held Monday at 11 am at the conference room of the members of parliament.

The meeting presided over by the convener of the organisation Aman Ullah Chowdhury was addressed among others by Prof Majidul Haq MP, Joint Convener Amin Sarwar, Jahangir Alam, Harunor Rashid, Abul Hossain, Aminuddin, Dewan Sultan Mahmud and Hasan Mahmud.

Manohardi Upazila Juba Kalyan Samity

The fourth founding anniversary of the Dhakastha Manohardi Upazila Juba Kalyan Samity was observed Tuesday at the residence of the Chief Advisor of the organisation former VC of the Dhaka University Prof A Mannan.

Prof Mannan was the chief

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Ref No. CO/Lalbag/DESA/AC-305/92/985 Dated: 20-7-92

1. Name of Office	Office of the Executive Engineer, CO, Lalbag, DESA.
2. Name of supply/work	Repair & maintenance of vehicle No. Dhaka-DA-1097 Mazda pick-up.
3. Tender No	CO/Lalbag/DESA/AC-305/92/985 dt 20-7-92.
4. Approximate cost	Tk 49,900/- (Taka forty-nine thousand nine hundred) only.
5. Eligibility of supplier/contractor	Enlisted contractor of any office under Electric Supply Authority/supplier or bonafide firm.
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7. Schedule to be had at	(1) Office of the Superintending Engineer, Consumer Service, DESA, 28, Bangabandhu Avenue, Dhaka. (2) Agrani Bank, Ray Saheb Bazar branch, Dhaka. Schedule can be purchased subject to permission from the head of the office concerned.
8. Last date of selling schedule	29-8-92.
9. Last date & time of submitting tender	30-8-92 up to 11-30 AM.
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What's on today . . .

National Coordination Committee

The National Coordination Committee for materialisation of the spirit of Liberation War and annihilation of the killers and collaborators of 1971 has decided to hold rally today (Wednesday) at 4 pm at the Bangabandhu Avenue protesting attack on the Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon.

Jahanara Imam and other leaders of the committee will address the rally.

Discussion on Tarkabagish

A discussion meeting on the occasion of the sixth death anniversary of Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish will be held today (Wednesday) at 5 pm at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) under the auspices of Gano Azadi League.

The meeting will be addressed among others by Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abus Samad MP, CPB leader Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, NAP leader Panikaz Bhat-tacharjee, Ganotantri Party leader Mohammad Afzal, Samyabadi Dal leader Dilip Barua, and the leaders of Gano Azadi League.

Seminar on Public Sector Consultancy Firms

A seminar on 'Public Sector Consultancy Firms in Developing Countries - A Case Study of NESPAK' will be held today (Wednesday) at 5 pm at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB).

The seminar organised by the IEB will be attended by its former President SM Al-Husaini as chief guest while the President Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury will preside. The main lecture will be delivered by the General Manager of the NESPAK Dr Tanveer Azhar.

Col Taher Sangsad

A meeting of the executive body of the Col Taher Sangsad will be held today (Wednesday) at 7-30 pm at the residence of Dr Ahmad Sharif, President of the organisation, at Dhan-mondi.

Grand rally of Pubali Bank CBA

A grand rally of the Pubali Bank Employees Union (CBA) will be held today (Wednesday) at 4-31 pm in front of the Pubali Bank main branch.

Seminar on nutrition

A seminar on 'Nutritional rehabilitation of children after dysentery illness with a high protein diet' will be held today (Wednesday) at the auditorium of the Institute of Food, Science and Technology, BCSIR, Dhaka.

Nutrition society of Bangladesh organised the seminar.

Rotary Club Dhaka North-West

Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will have their regular weekly meeting jointly with the Inner Wheel Club of Dhaka North West when their installation function will be held today (Wednesday) at 5-30 PM at Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka.

Prof Jahanara Begum, State Minister for Cultural Affairs will grace the occasion as chief guest.

Training course on Legal Awareness

The Institute For Law and Development will hold a training course on Legal Awareness for teachers and students of class X at the Agrani Balika Biddalaya today from 9 am to 12 noon.

BTV
Wednesday

- 5-00 Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary
- 5-10 News in Bangla
- 5-20 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5-25 Sports programme
- 6-30 Moder Gorob Moder Asha
- 7-05 Hijal Tamal
- 8-00 News in Bangla
- 8-30 Dance programme MacGyver
- 9-00 News in English
- 10-30 Magazine
- 11-30 Khabar/The News
- 11-40 Thursday's programme summary
- 11-45 Closing

Chinese envoy calls on Mosharraf

The Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh, Chen Songlu, called on the Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain at his office Tuesday, reports BSS.

The envoy stayed with the minister for some time and discussed different matters of common interests, specially the assistance and cooperation of China for the exploration and development of Energy and Mineral Resources of Bangladesh.

First among girls in Rajshahi Board SSC

Prova Sharmin of Pabna Govt. Girl's High School secured first position among girl students and fifth position in combined merit list securing letters in five subjects obtaining 824 marks of Social Science Group in SSC under Rajshahi Education Board this year, says a press Release.

Shrimp production increases through local technology

The country has produced 17 hundred kilogram of shrimp per acre this year through introduction of locally evolved technology in some selected areas, reports BSS.

This was disclosed in a meeting on development of shrimp cultivation held at the conference room of the Industries Ministry with Industries Minister M Shamsul Islam Khan in the chair.

It was also known from the meeting that the success was achieved by using locally produced shrimp feed, oxygen and by lowering the level of the shrimp land or more use of sea water.

The Industries Minister urged the shrimp cultivators to use the country's locally evolved technology to raise the shrimp output and to enhance export earning of the country from this sector.

He said by the successful

15-member police team leaves for Sarajevo

A 15-member team of Bangladesh Police left Dhaka Tuesday morning for Sarajevo via London to join the UN Peace-Keeping Force there, a police press release said, reports BSS.

The team comprising superintendent of police, sergeants and sub-inspectors will work as police monitor under the UN Peace-Keeping Force now stationed there.

Indian sarees recovered

CID police yesterday recovered Indian sarees worth about Tk 20,000 from three railway passengers at the Airport Railway Station in Dhaka, according to a press release, reports BSS.

Weather

Dry weather to prevail

By Staff Correspondent

A few places at Khulna division and the regions of Chittagong, Noakhali, Faridpur, Dhaka, Sylhet and Pabna may experience temporary light rain or thundershower during the next 24 hours commencing from 6 pm Tuesday, met office forecasts.

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry elsewhere across the country, it says, adding that the day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged during the period over the country.

The highest temperature of the country on Tuesday 35.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest, 21.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Chittagong.

The sun sets today (Wednesday) at 6-29 pm and rises tomorrow (Thursday) at 5-35 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns Tuesday are as follows:

Cities/Towns	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.5	26.8	83	74
Chittagong	32	-	68	86
Rajshahi	32.8	25.5	78	81
Khulna	32.6	26.2	-	74
Cox's Bazar	31	25.5	85	85
Sylhet	-	24.5	-	64
Barisal	32	-	-	86
Dinajpur	33.5	25.6	79	67

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