

LIVING

Welcoming the Warm Weather

by Parveen Anam



WHEN the traditional revelry is over and the Dhakite has managed to drag himself off to bed in the early hours of the morning, the season of spring will dawn, and the sun will bravely try to catch up with cheer. It's a time of beauty and a time of joy; a time of hope and certainly no time for despair. On one morning of the year the thoughts must turn inwards towards the positive realities, and hope life holds out to all. The pessimist will shake his head, probably, and insist that there is no silver lining in the clouds but it's the optimist who will triumph. As always, the dawn spring should certainly hold nothing but beautiful reflections in its total perspective.

As children, we were taught to love and give and take. Very little seems to be left of that

today. But what is there for us to lift and spread and distribute amongst ourselves? We can all share and share alike. It never fails to surprise the ordinary people amongst us as to how much there still is of the good items to hand around — with an open mind and an open heart. It is only when we come down to the day to day pettiness, that life seems to weigh down upon us. The warm weather cannot rejuvenate us by its temperature alone. The world is the meeting place of the great, and I believe there is a lot of greatness left-graciousness, without which we cannot, and will not survive.

It is not necessarily the big things in life, which make either the New Year or our existence worthwhile. One flower or one small kind word can

work wonders. But then, who are we to sit and preach sermons? Those are for the wise and wonderful. Ours is to contribute our little to the goodness of life around us. Great events will shatter the earth, probably. Leaders will come and go. Some willingly, and some not so willingly. Deaths and births will cast their inevitable shadows and joy on the lives of the masses, and yet it is the masses themselves who will contribute in their own humble ways to the glory of the coming year. We all have our little desires and hopes, tucked away in the remotest corner of our lives. And what better time is there to see them come true than during the warm season, when we can peek at them and silently, say a little prayer, both for ourselves and our loved ones. For some, it will bring only

the best, and for some, as is the law of nature, not very good times. And it is these "some" who must keep up their chin. It cannot be all bad and when cold weather is over and people they call and probably will try and rebuild from the dust and tatters of their dreams and hopes. That is what the warm season is all about. For are "we not what we dream," in the words of the wise? If all the dreams cannot come true, that again is the way of life. But some must and will come true. That also is nature's law.

A moment taken off the hustle and bustle of trying to make ends meet and achieve everything in the short time available the most wonderful gift to oneself, in the warm weather morning, over the cup of tea, as the sun rises on our hopes and desires grow, is perhaps the silent, golden wish of the time honoured "into a 'brave new' world, let me awake." The world, at the moment, is a very diverse, shattered one with the "milk of human kindness" flowing very thin. Yet, at some point, man has managed to transcend the borders of his own narrow perspective, and perform the greatest acts of kindness. Perhaps it is these acts of kindness, which keep the wheels of humanity turning, and the faith that every cold has that silver lining is what keeps us going. In the face of the strongest odds.

Thus, at the end of it all, let us try and keep our smiles ready and kindness reared. And this year, will perhaps, turn out to be a positive one after all.



Indian Cuisine

Lamb Curry (for 4)

- 1 lb lean lamb (preferably leg)
- 4 green chillies
- 4 large onions
- 2 cloves of garlic
- Salt to taste
- 1/4 lb ghee or cooking fat
- 3 tablepoonsful curry paste
- 1 1/2 pints stock

Chop the onions finely and fry till golden brown in the ghee. Add the garlic (crushed) and the chillies (sliced), and cook for a few minutes. Add the curry paste and allow to simmer for 10 minutes.

long winding rivers while listening to Pankaj's latest romantic ghazal.

Eating a healthy diet is also quite important in dealing with stress. We tend to take more caffeine during stress period hoping it will relax us but it has almost the opposite effect. Eat more natural food like fruits and vegetables. Besides, it is also good for your skin.

Last, but not the least, ask yourself if your investment of time and energy is where you would like it to be. If not, probably that is what is causing your anxiety. If it is your place of work, change it. In this fast changing world, stress is here to stay. What matters is how we handle our reactions. As I have mentioned before, you can close to let it make you upset and sick or just let it go and stay healthy. Some the energy for something. Take it from me nothing is worth more than your health. You live only once. Make it a whole-some and a happy one. Take things more easy, it really does not matter if you have not achieved the best of everything, but it definitely matters whether you are happy or not. Accept your life for what it is, instead of lamenting for what it could be and try to smile a bit, sometimes.

How to Cope with Stress

by Dr Razina Quddus

TODAY'S life has become extremely fast paced with technology, work, environmental changes, and of course family issues, and this in turn creates a lot of pressure resulting in stress.

Our body can respond in a multiple way to stress.

- (1) Hormonal change — adrenaline surge.
- (2) Blood pressure and heart heat increases
- (3) Fast Breathing
- (4) Increased muscular tension
- (5) Blood sugar rises
- (6) Increased appetite or decreased appetite
- (7) Increased sweating

ditional imbalance and distress. It may even cause pessimism and depression stress may be in the mind but it does not always stay there and one of the main systems that it can affect is the muscular skeletal system, and cause the dreaded back pain suffered by a large number of people. Muscle tension usually starts from emotional stress either from trying too hard to achieve something, or holding back your emotions, and feelings, just because your spouse or friend does not have the time to listen to you. Some people also tend to store feelings which they do not want to

tense our muscles more.

It is not only negative worries which causes stress, but positive happenings can also cause anxiety, like joining a new job, getting married, and believe it or not, for some girls buying the right dress or jewellery for a particular occasion can cause a lot of anxiety.

How do we get rid of all this stress? It is actually quite easy. The first step is to get to know what really bothers you. Stresses are unique to each person. What is stressful to one person may be just a piece of cake to another. Once you have identified situations that cause you anxiety you will much better prepared to deal with them. Learn your signs of stress because it is different for individuals. It could be insomnia, sweating, anger, unable to concentrate, or emptying the fridge with your voracious appetite.

It is best if you can deal with such stressful situations with a different attitude and response. Changing your attitude could make you a more understanding person. For example, if someone's crazy remark bothers you and you react to it with anger, it will just make you uptight and dismayed. Just ignore it, it is not worth your mental peace. It is entirely your choice to let something upset you or just let it go. I would say let it go it is definitely better for your health. You have to understand that there are things in your life that you simply cannot control accept them, and you will be much better off.

Regular exercise will also give you an outlet for some of your tension. They make you health deeply and pump more oxygen-rich blood through your body, and also helps to release hormones called endorphins which relieves pain: It is really helpful in achieving relaxation to have, a good night's sleep.

Join in activities that are fun and soothes your nerves and helps you to forget emotional problems. Sometimes doing good to others makes you feel good about yourself.

Do some light reading, listen to your favourite singer whether it is Jagriti or Madonna. Mix with people with positive attitude: people who can make you laugh and share with your joy. Go for a long drive and enjoy the green meadows and



Courtesy: "Shananda"

face, which eventually cause emotional imbalance.

When muscles become tensed, the blood supply through them becomes impaired. As a result less oxygen and nourishment reaches the muscle and therefore works less efficiently and may even cause muscular spasm. It is a vicious cycle because spasm causes pain, and pain causes us

Of Finned, Feathered and Furred Friends

by Fayza Haq

ANGLING is a favourite pastime wherever there is any water. This is seen regularly at Dhanmandi Lake, Dhaka, which has a regular association, with a chairperson, secretary, licence and the rest of designations and paraphernalia that accompany it. They angle sometimes with even simple firm sticks and fish lines, or if they are more affluent, with proper reels, hooks and rods. These gentlemen may be seen angling at various hours of the day and evening, depending on the weather. There are not only the "sahibs" who go there as a past-time, but also urchins, who catch fish of various sizes, shapes and colour, and next hawk them along Satmasjid Road.

One knows of an individual who guarded his fishing rods so jealously that his students — as snide cynicism — referred to them as his sons. Not being aware of his lineage or his family overseas. Who was to be blamed for their impertinent remark? Yet anglers have been known to guard their equipments jealously, both at home and abroad.

Going to Banani or Gulshan, near the Manik Mia Avenue, one is often accosted in the evenings with large, freshly caught fish, which are sold to the owners of cars that pass by. One wonders where the fish have originated, and why they are being hawked at main roadway junctions. There must be something underhand, or otherwise why should anyone hawk them on the wayside, as is being done the migratory birds, coming from as far as Siberia. One has seen these ducks, and exotic delicately feathered creatures being sold along Elephant Road, as a routine. This is despite the written reports, features and pictures in our national dailies.

Yet, at the same time, fish are reared with tenderness, in many of the homes that one has visited at Dhanmandi,

Green Road, and Tikatully. The affluent in the city have even built ponds for them. The fish one has inspected at these ponds were "pangash" and not the specimens of goldfish at Motijheel shops, or those that line New Elephant and Old Elephant Road, or even in the vicinity of Kamna Bhaban. Dogs, cats and birds remain the favourite pets of the Dhakaites. A cock with its pet name "Madbar" is coaxed and coaxed in a home, at Dhaka, by a daughter of a millionaire.

Meanwhile, alley cats, the progenies of other tabbies and stray cats, have been known to be regularly vaccinated, and next flown to Chittagong, from Dhaka. This is due to the fact that the owners treasure the pets to such an extent and guard them with such incredible care, that they cannot bear to have them being put in a sack, and next delivered at the rubbish tip, or the large city markets. Meanwhile, the female cats are carefully ligated by the veterinary surgeon at a fairly high cost, considering that we are living in a third world country, where poverty abounds.

I have known pet mongrels being treated as treasured infants of the houses at the Maghbazaar area. Here the puppy, caught by the maid outside the residential gate, was fed with the most expensive powdered milk available at Dhaka; kept in the verandah, against all qualms of conscience of the basically religious Muslim family, while a light burnt all night. As the pet grew bigger, it was reported that it slept in the maid servants' quarters, and was regularly fed with tidbits by the grown up children of the house. Imagine the shock and horror of the children of the house, when the grown puppy was reportedly poisoned.

Meanwhile Alsatisans, dogs

of a hybrid nature, originating partly from Afghan Hounds and Pekinese breeds, are regularly seen being taken for walks along the lanes of Dhanmandi, Gulshan and Banani. Since one has not toured or investigated as to what happens at Uttara, one cannot conjecture exactly what goes on there with pets, even though one might have heard some news which might be authentic.

As for "matras", cuckoos and parrots, they are kept in places all over the city, ranging from Baridhara to Wari — they are known to be kept near the drawing room, in large cages, or even in the verandah that serves as a corridor to all the rooms. They are sold at rea-

sonable prices along many of the main highways, leading from Dhanmandi to the Zero Point and beyond. Some bird-lovers feed them on grams, and others on expensive fruits, depending on the financial circumstances of the individuals.

One has known women to be jealous in the city of Dhaka, while their petits-amis spend the limited time for the rendezvous, on stray dogs and cats, which have become household pets, in places ranging from Old Dhaka to D.O.H.S. Banani and Gulshan.

It is remarkable what a life of a Riley some animals in certain places are lucky enough to lead in the metropolis of Bangladesh.

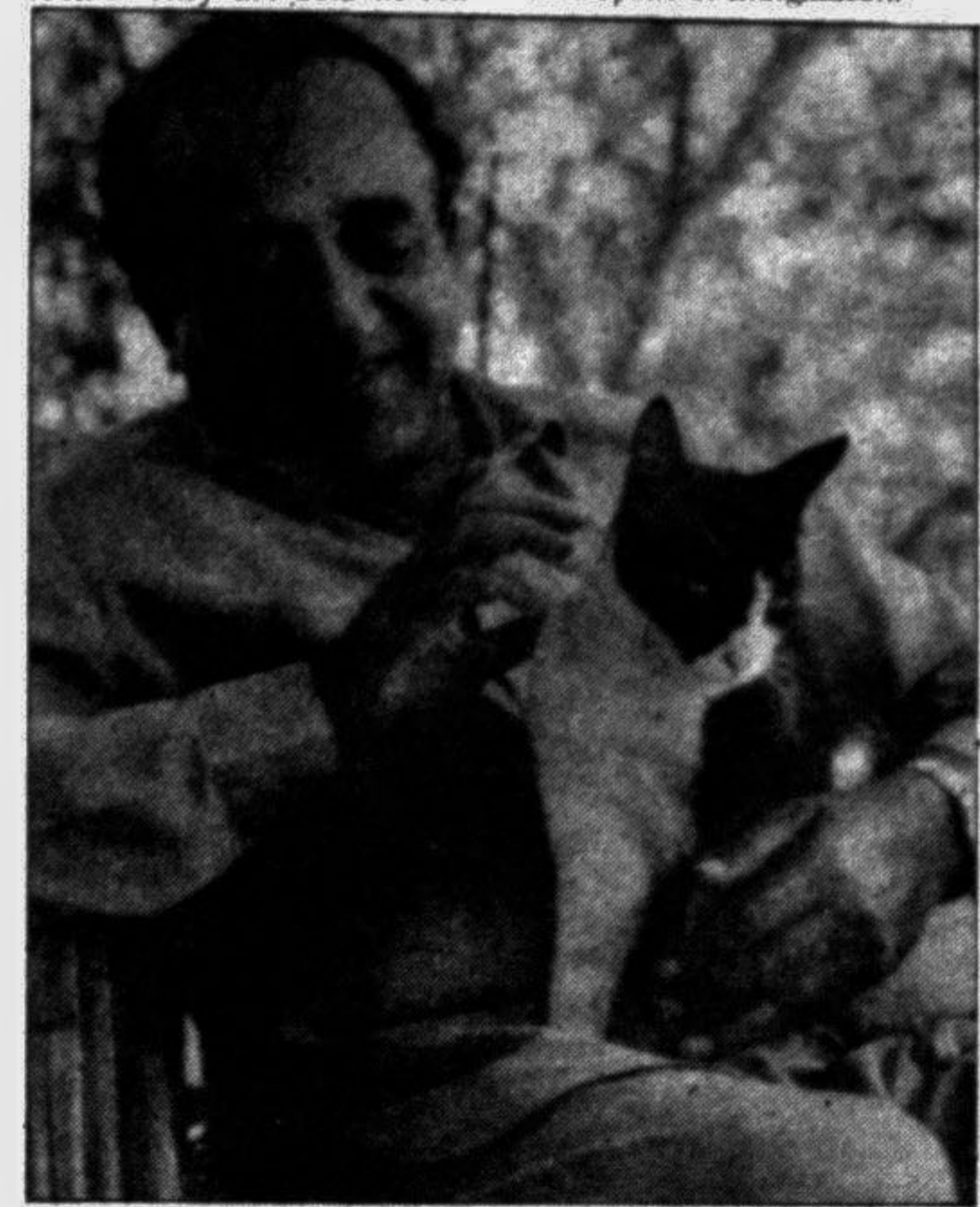


Photo: Albab Ahmed

Queries of a Freed Female

by Farzana Haque

Why do you think I deserve "freedom" A release from your chains? Why do I do wrong? Where did I go wrong? Answer me, tell me. Why do you look down?

I did my duties I smiled when I had to Though tears lurked in the eyes. I worked, laboured, fed you Like I should, I had been taught to do.

I played my cards right I stayed out of sight. I danced to your fogs I refrained from "making it big". Then what is really the blight?

I left my world behind And stood at your door I worked from nine to four To keep your dreams alive

Why, how can you do this? What have I done?

I loved you Like a wife should Faithfully, fruitfully, wantonly, I looked at no other, thought of none. I let myself go Whenever you needed me so Why am I a "fallen woman"?

People stare at me As I slouch by, blazes in their eyes. Others lower their heads in shame They demand a social exile I have stigma on my morality I have done what the "contract" required You don't speak to me anymore You don't tell me the score You signed your name Gave your consent, set me free Like a caged bird, with the chains

Still dangling, I did not want to be such.

I am a woman I looked, wanted, needed bliss: Marital bliss, Isn't it natural, real? I wanted an identity, sought an identity I am a person of my own right I had to find myself in you and in my world. A woman is also a person of her world Not an immovable chattel. I am a human being Needed you, you were my man I was your woman. Yet in an unspeakable manner, You did not need me anymore You freed me Society blames me And I Cannot comprehend Just what went wrong Do I have a "say"? Or, is this the men's way?

a bowl, spread thickly with yoghurt and leave for about 2 hours so that the yoghurt is absorbed.

Prepare the saffron by placing it under the grill for 1 minute so that it becomes dry and crisp, powder it with the fingers, then pour over it a tablespoonful of boiling water and leave to dissolve.

Prepare the rice by the 1st method given above, but before returning it to the pan melt the butter with 1/2 cupful of water, then take out half for use later on. Strain the cooked rice and place half in a saucepan, put the chicken on top and then the remainder of the rice mixed with the saffron. Cover with a tight-fitting lid, cook fast for 7 minutes, add the remaining water and butter, and cook slowly for another 15 minutes.

Lamb Pullao (for 6)

- 1 lb rice
- 1 lb lamb
- 4 oz butter or cooking fat
- 1/2 lb onions
- 2

Soak the rice for about 2 hours. Fry sliced onions until golden brown, add the lamb, cut into small pieces, and about 1/2 pint water and cook until tender and almost dry. Put in the rice, twice as much water and cook as for rice — 2nd method — given above.

Potatoes and Chicken (Sali moorgi)

(Parsce speciality) (for 4)

- 1 medium roasting chicken
- 1 lb peeled potatoes
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 medium onion
- 1 tablespoonful ghee or cooking fat
- 1 pint cooking oil
- Salt to taste
- A piece of fresh ginger or 1/2 teaspoonful ginger powder

Wash, clean and cut the chicken into convenient joints. Crush the ginger and garlic together and rub the mixture over the chicken, then leave it for 1 hour. Cut the potatoes into thin straws, sprinkle them with salt and leave. Slice the onion thinly and fry in the ghee. When golden, add the chicken and fry lightly; then 5 teacupfuls of water and salt to taste, and cook on a low heat until the chicken is tender and only a cupful of gray remains. Then fry the potato straws in very hot oil (they should be cream-coloured and very crisp). Dish up the chicken and cover with the potato straws. This is an excellent dish for children because, unlike nearly all Indian dishes, it contains no spices.

Chicken Pullao (for 6)

- Medium-sized boiling fowl
- 1 1/2 lb rice
- 1/2 teaspoonful saffron
- 1/2 lb butter or cooking fat
- 1 bottle yoghurt

Boil the chicken in a little water until tender enough to break easily into joints. Break into convenient pieces, put in



How cool can one look in a cotton sari! Photo: Albab Ahmed