

Dhaka Day by Day

A Locksmith of Character

By Nurul Huq



"Every locksmith isn't thief. Tell me, do I look like a thief?", demanded Babu Mia, a locksmith by trade and a gossip by inclination. I favoured him with a closer examination, and peered at him closely. "Not at all", I said, smiling at him encouragingly. "You look more like a *mullah* to me." This 45-year-old man nodded at me serenely, adjusted his cap, ran his fingers through his beard, and I suspect, began to like me better.

I have called him into my house to fix a door-lock. He fixed it like the pro he was, then got lively and started chatting. "Of course, there are many locksmiths who have connections with the under-world", he said. "But I've a *thanas pass* (a police certificate), and I'm an honest man." "How much do you make a day?", I asked admiringly. "Anywhere between Tk 50-200, depending on the circumstances", said this virtuous impressively. After house-rent and food, this leaves me with Tk 2,000 a month. I'm not complaining. I pay Tk 100 a month for the mess I live in at Hazaribagh. I share a room with six other people. A *buu* (maid) takes Tk 50 from me. Food costs Tk 700 a month. My wife and five children stay in Faridpur. I've been working as a locksmith for the last 20 years.

"What problems do you face?", I said, pushing some *filebis* (sweetmeat) towards him. He swallowed to and got lively. "If someone calls me to his house after 8 at night, I don't go unless I know him well. And I also avoid going into a house at any time of day or night, if there's only one man around. He might be trying to rob the house."

"Have you every fallen into trouble?", I said. "Several times", he said. "Once, four-five men took me into the third floor of a large building. It was rather quiet for such a large house. They asked me to make a key very fast. Too late I sensed something fishy and furtive about them,

something was not quite right. It was too late to back out, so I spilt the key at the last moment, and bungled the job again and again, pretending to be a novice.

"Another time, a gang of school-boys brought me a soap with the imprint of a key on it. They looked like heroin addicts and thieves, so I turned them down. Once, a hijacker-type of gang, you know, the type with long hair and gold chains — they brought me a wax imprint. Turning them down flatly was risky, so I asked them for a hundred bucks at once. They agreed just as fast. Now this was a problem. What to do? So I pretended I was ill, as a last resort, and managed to get rid of them at last."

"How virtuous you are!", I said admiringly. "You lost a lump sum for your principles." "Well I've to live up to my principles", he said modestly. "Perhaps there was another reason too", I said. "You might have got into trouble with the police." "There was that too", he conceded and twinkled at me.

"What was your worst experience?", I said. "It happened two years back", he said promptly. "A jeep-load of hijackers kidnapped me. They blind-folded me. When they took off the scarf, I found myself in a grand house, in Gulshan perhaps. They made me open ten massive steel almirahs. When I asked for money, they beat me up. Then they blind-folded me again, and forced me into the car. Half an hour later, they threw me out of the running car. When I took off the scarf, I found myself in a ditch in Mahammadpur. God saved me that day. I was still in one piece. It could have been worse. But I still see nightmares from time to time."

"You seem quite happy with your work", I said. "Oh, I am", he said. "I'm honest, so God looks after me." He pocketed the money I gave him, *salaamed*, and swinging his keys and counting his beads, went his way.

Garments workers demand Eid bonus by May 28

Garments workers at a rally yesterday demanded Eid festival bonus and urged to pay it by May 28, reports UNB. Jatiya Garments Sramik Federation held a rally at Topkhana Road in the afternoon and warned that they will announce greater programmes if the bonus is not paid within the stipulated time.

Amirul Huq Amin, general secretary of the federation said festival bonus is a must to be paid by the employers as per country's labour law but workers of only 35 per cent garments factories got Eid bonus last year.

He also demanded disbursement of salary for the month of May before Eid-ul-Azha.

The rally also announced a demand-week from today (Saturday) which includes holding of rallies in front of garments factories and processions.

The rally was addressed among others by Shamsunnahar, Baharane Sultan Bahar, Parul Begum, Mohammad Shaheen, Nurunnahar, Md Qatayum, Marium Begum, Alam Kabir, Kazi Ruhul Amin, Salma Begum, Bithi and Anwar.

Later, a procession was brought out which paraded through Baitul Makkaram and Gুলستان.

One killed in road mishap

One person was killed and three others were injured in separate incidents in the city Thursday.

A 35-year-old rickshaw passenger has hit by a speeding bus at Fakirpur in the city. The unidentified victim later succumbed to his injuries in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



- 5.00 Opening announcement Al-Quran
- 5.10 Programmatic summary
- 5.15 News in Bangla
- 5.25 Amra Natun
- 5.45 Cartoon : Peter Pan and Pirates
- 7.05 Bansharoc
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 Maito Manush
- 9.00 Anshun
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Drama series : Dallas
- 11.30 Khabar/The News
- 11.40 Tomorrow's programme
- 11.45 Closing



Poet Sufia Kamal speaking at a discussion on Shaheed Dhirendranath Dutta at the National Museum auditorium yesterday.

Dhaka iterates support for new information order

Bangladesh has reiterated its full support for the establishment of a new and unbiased world information and communication order, reports BSS.

The Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Ambassador Humayun Kabir, addressing the 15th substantive session of the United Nations Committee on Information at the UN Headquarters at New York (Wednesday) said information had a crucial role to play in the nation-building process and promoting amity among the nations.

Referring to the UN's important role in the field of information dissemination, he said, our quest for a new world information and communication order was to obtain a fairer deal in the dissemination process, so that there was a synthesis of all voices and stances and information dissemination was balanced, unbiased and objective.

The Bangladesh Permanent Representative said that in view of the new challenges and new opportunities before the UN, the Department of Public Information should recast its priorities taking into account

the current developments and the needs of the time and emphasised rationalised reallocation of resources to project and promote UN activities and operations.

He called for better projection of UN peacekeeping operations.

He also called for publication of booklets and brochures in Bangla to inform our people about the UN peace keeping missions.

The Permanent Representative urged DPI to appoint a professional full-time director for United Nations Centre in Dhaka soon. He welcomed the idea of more effective and imaginative use of Dag Hammarskjold Library as a centre of cultural activities.

Ambassador Humayun Kabir said, the present government of Bangladesh affirmed its commitment and support for the freedom of press and freedom of expression and opinion.

Referring to press freedom in Bangladesh he told the committee quoting from a recent speech of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia: "Freedom of press, as you all know, is the best safeguard of democracy, transparency and accountability."

Speakers recall Dhirendranath's contribution

By Staff Correspondent
Speakers at a discussion Friday stressed the need for a greater political unity to root out all anti-liberation elements from the country.

The meeting organised in memory of Dhirendranath Dutta, a former minister who was killed in 1971 by the occupation army, was addressed by Begum Sufia Kamal, Abdus Samad Azad MP, Dr Anisuzzaman, Badaruddin Umar, Shawkat Osman, Prof Rafiqul Islam and Noorjahan Murshid with Justice Kemal Uddin Hossain in the chair.

Recalling the contribution of Dhirendranath to the nation, Sufia Kamal said he would be honoured truly only if his ideals could be instilled in the new generation.

Dhirendranath was a genuine Bangalee. He could easily escape his death by leaving the country, but he did not do so, she added.

Abdus Samad Azad said the communal forces of the country gained much strength in the last 17 years after the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

It would be disastrous for the nation if they were allowed to do so further, he said.

He, however, called upon all pro-liberation forces to be united to resist the evil forces. Describing the role of Dhirendranath during Pakistani rule, Badaruddin Umar said he was the man who strict to his ideals throughout his life. Dhirendranath maintained his honesty till his death and faced death boldly, he added.

130 arrested in city

Police rounded up 130 people, including 30 wanted criminals, from different parts of the city (yesterday) a DMP press release said yesterday, reports UNB.

The arrested also include one under the Anti-Terrorism Act, four charged with robbery, one accused of kidnapping and ten of burglary.

Meanwhile, Demra police recovered 25 bottles of banned India-made Phensidyl syrup from a slum at Saidabad yesterday. Police arrested Hanufa Bibi (45) from whose possession the banned syrup was recovered during a special drive at 4 am.

Rly West Zone income ups

RAJSHAHI, May 21: Bangladesh Railway West Zone's earning from ticket sale registered a growth of over fifty per cent in first ten days of current month compared of the last ten days of the previous month, official sources said today, reports BSS.

The authorities said by selling tickets to seven lakh two thousand passengers of Railway West Zone area during the ten days earned Taka 1,04,64,000. This is more than Taka 35 lakh higher than that of earnings of last ten days of April, a PID source said.

The increased income is attributed to extensive drive against passengers travelling without ticket.

Office-bearers

CHITTAGONG, May 21: Jantu Barua of Mathematics and Linkon Marma of Political Science departments were elected President and General Secretary respectively of the Chittagong University Buddha Chhatra Parishad for the year 1992-93 at a general meeting of the Parishad, reports BSS.

Role of social bodies vital for environment protection: Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday gave a clarion call to the social activists, NGOs, imams, priests and medians to help create public awareness in protecting environment, generating income, planting trees and maintaining health and sanitation, reports BSS.

The President said since environment required a sensible conduct from all social beings, the role of social organisations both national and international could hardly be overemphasized.

He was addressing as chief guest the seminar on "The Role of Social Organisations in Developing Environment" organised by the Greater Dhaka District Association here yesterday morning at BCIC auditorium. Presided over by the President of the Association and Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, the seminar was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Environment Gayshwar Roy, journalists Glas Kamal Chowdhury and Reazuddin Ahmed, Association Secretary General A B M Walur Rahman Khan and Dr Mohiuddin Faruq. The President said that the

government was totally committed to arrest the negative effects of environmental degradation and to effect overall environmental improvement for sustainable development.

The government, President Biswas said, identified poverty as a great polluter and was acting towards poverty alleviation through its various programmes including the programme of "Daal bhat" for everyone as pronounced by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The President listed various measures undertaken by the government for protecting environment and said the Environment Ministry formulated the environment policy last year and action programme for 15 major sectors.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Arefa Rahman, wife of Advocate A S M Tabibur Rahman will be held today, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil has been arranged at 4 pm today at 'Priobas', 49 Siddheswari.

Weather

Temperature may rise

By Staff Correspondent

Weather forecast valid for the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Saturday) says, rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions and the regions of Jessore, Tangail, Mymensingh and weather is likely to remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country.

The Met office forecasts, day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius over the country. The highest temperature of the country 35.8 degree Celsius was recorded in Sathira yesterday (Friday) and the lowest 19.2 degree was recorded in Rangpur.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 6.38 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 5.13 am. The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	33.6	22.8	63	66
Chittagong	33.7	25.2	76	75
Rajshahi	33.0	20.0	66	76
Khulna	34.4	24.4	83	70
Burinal	33.2	23.8	78	80
Cox's Bazar	33.5	24.8	73	63
Sylhet	33.4	22.0	73	66
Dinajpur	31.5	19.4	73	63

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