

Dhaka Day by Day

Sweet for Heaven

by Avik Sanwar Rahman

"How sweet is mortal sovereignty — think some;
Others — How blest the paradise to come!
Ah, take the cash in hand and waive the rest:
Oh, the brave music of a distant drum!"

— Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

The 'distant drum beat' was well worth listening to even to the Neanderthals some one hundred thousand years ago. At that time brain reached its present size and its growth ceased. Man's body had been shaped into its modern form several hundred thousand years before that. Now brain and body were complete. Together they made a new and marvellous creature, charged with power, intelligence and creative energy. In the annals of anthropology his arrival is celebrated by change in name, from 'Homo erectus' — the Man who stands erect — to 'Homo sapiens' — the Man of Wisdom.

"Will for life is will for form. Death, in its most visible and immediate expression, is the disintegration of form. The first thing man did upon discovering that he was mortal was to erect a tomb. Art began with the consciousness of death," says Octavio Paz, indeed, the graveyard of the Neanderthals breaks through the silence of centuries showing the glint of gold amid the death's shades and the echo of love. The potteries, the style of art, mythology, religion, all that survived the millennia at the graveyard of the Neanderthals, out of the timeless misty dark, stare into the twentieth century — the reflections of our ancestors; their consciousness of the ultimate destiny and the rituals inextricably connected with death. The Neanderthals died out about thirty five thousand years ago, but some of their genes, with hereditary information, probably exist in the human population today.

The mausoleum, since ancient times, has been both an homage to the death and a defiance to death; the body decays, turns to dust, but the monument remains. Even Islam that took pride in being non-ritual and material could not resist the splendour of Taj Mahal. Nowadays, though such grand monuments are not visible on the graveyard, still majority of the people bury their deads, while funeral is

universal. "Now the new year reviving the old desires, from the thoughtful soul to solitude retreats" — here the drum beats, dance here! The 'echo of love', nowadays, turns into the anxiety of 'heaven or hell! And the Muslims of our country is of no exception.

Though death is an unavoidable phenomenon of our passing days, surprisingly we have very few occasions to perform the in-

exhaustible rituals connected with death. Ironically, the death of my grand-father exposed to me, one of the miseries of mankind in a sarcastic way. Muslims in Bangladesh used to offer sweets to the poor for the blessings of almighty Allah so that the deceased gets rid of his sin and thereby gains a ticket to the heaven. The permanent street beggars eagerly stick around beyond the boundary of Azampur graveyard for the 'loba-raks' that would be distributed after the funeral and which, more often, become the only sustenance for the day. It is a familiar scene and is readily expected by

the city people. Me and my friend were in charge of distributing sweets to those beggars, who seemed to us, for that time being, an easy access to heaven. But, that was not so easy! All of a sudden the 'hungry mouths' became an 'angry mob'. They're going for 'burning and looting' tonight; I could almost hear the screaming as the fiery avalanche struck, it must have been like being trapped in a furnace, the furnace of appetite. The fury, frantic indignation; the depth of pain and height of passion evaporate in the air; they no more want to be the 'ticket seller' for the heaven; at least for once they could spit on to the trickery of mankind.

The "sweets" were all scattered on the street, making a mockery of our craving for heaven. The disdainful dances of the 'living fossils' beyond the graveyard and the collective groan across the ages from within, together with the "brave music" drums up:

"But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An Angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking Earth for Heaven."

— John Dryden
A Song for St. Cecilia's Day.



An eleven-member delegation of Bangladesh Hajj Jatri Kalyan Parishad led by its Chairman Maulana Shah Sufi AFM Wahid, Peer Saheb of Quasemabad, called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday. —PID photo

Govt firm to ensure rule of law, Biswas tells Bar members

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday called for establishing rule of law on a firm footing for unhindered pace of socio-economic development in the country, reports BSS.

"There will be no scope for terrorism and violence if rule of law can be ensured in every sphere", President Biswas told a group of about one hundred lawyers of the Supreme Court and Dhaka District Bar at Bangabhaban here.

The lawyers met the President to felicitate him on his return from Saudi Arabia after performing hajj.

President Biswas said the present government, which came to power through a free and fair election, was committed to ensure rule of law and natural justice to the citizens to rid the society of all vices.

He said the government was also firm to give democracy an institutional shape and he sought cooperation of all including the lawyers in this regard.

President Biswas called upon all irrespective of party affiliations to contribute their mite in the various development efforts of the government for improving the lot of the commonman.

Referring to the development taking place in the South Asian countries, the President said with determination, unity and hard work of all people, Bangladesh could attain this development.

The lawyers apprised the President of some of their problems.

Later, President Biswas led a 'munajat' seeking divine blessings for peace, progress and prosperity of the nation and welfare of the people.

Clarification on Road Division dev projects

The attention of the government has been drawn to a news appearing in a section of the press on the 'poor progress in the implementation of Road Division development projects,' according to a PID source yesterday, reports BSS.

Following is the government version on the subject: Projects taken under NICAR, construction works of road and bridges besides rehabilitation and maintenance thereof taken with the own resources of the government and the works of the aided projects have so far been completed hundred per cent.

The figure of Tk 622.52 crore, which appeared in the press as being the money spent till April '93, is in fact the money spent for development works till February '93. Because at least 8 to 10 weeks' time is needed to receive money for the aided project after the completion of the works, the figure for February has been inadequately shown as of April-93.

Since fact was not taken

into consideration, the government feels it necessary to give the clarification to sink all confusion likely to arise therefrom.

That the government spent Taka 622.52 crore only against the target of Tk 978.75 crore till April-93 is not based on facts, the handout added.

In fact, the physical works of the 1992-93 financial year under relief and rehabilitation programmes have been completed long before the advent of the rainy season. Besides, the Mohananda bridge (Shaheed Capt. Mohiuddin Jahangir Bir-Shrestha Bridge, with Chinese assistance, at Chapal-Nawabganj — is going to be opened to traffic on 23rd June by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. The badly damaged Karnaully Bridge, now at the final stage of reconstruction, scheduled to be opened by July 15, a quarter ahead the schedule while the construction works of the Gumti-Meghna bridge at Daudkandi is progressing very fast and is expected to be completed in February 1995, at least one year before the schedule.

Moudud due today

The Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party chief Moudud Ahmed returns home today (Sunday) after a 10-day visit to China, says a press release.

Job opportunities for 5,000 doctors to be created in 5 yrs: Kamal

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said here yesterday that employment opportunity for four to five thousand doctors would be created within the next three to five years, reports BSS.

Inaugurating Doctors Welfare Scheme of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) at a function at the auditorium of PG hospital here, the Minister said age limit for entry to government jobs would be raised to 32.

Presided over by BMA President MA Majed, the function was also addressed by Dr AKM Kamruzzaman MP, Dr Asfar Hossain Mollah, MP, Dr Strajul Huq MP, Dr Kazi A Yusuf MP, Dr Habibur Rahman

MP, Prof Modasser Ali, Dr Strajul Islam and Secretary General BMA Gazi A Huq.

The Minister said the government had been trying hard to create employment opportunity for the doctors. He said the existing 100-bed hospitals would be gradually turned into 250-beds.

Regarding the welfare scheme of doctors, the Minister said he would extend all-out cooperation for its success. He announced a donation of Taka 50 thousand for the schemes fund.

He indicated the possibility of a favourable announcement regarding the 23-point demand of engineers, doctors and agriculturalists (PROKICH).



Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan handing over the Sword of Honour to the best all-round cadet BSUO Mhammad Kamrul Hassan at the President's Parade of 28th BMA Long Course at the Bangladesh Military Academy, Bhatary, Chittagong on Thursday. —ISPR photo

21,749 regd doctors in country: JS

At present, the country has 21,749 registered doctors of whom 8,749 were absorbed in government services, the Health and Family Welfare Minister told parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

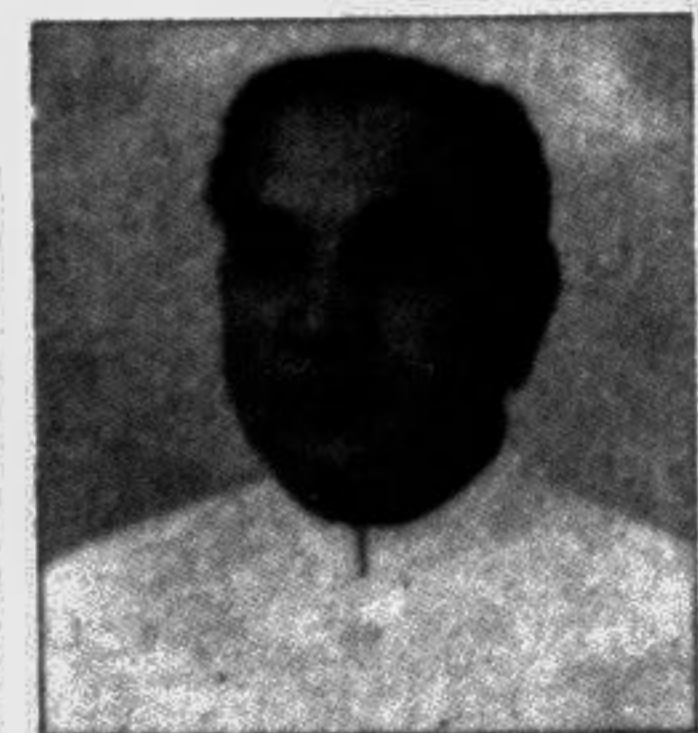
Replying to Khan Tipu Sultan (AL), Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said the government has no statistics about the number of unemployed doctors in the country.

Relief for flood victims demanded

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad has demanded that the flood-stricken Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Sunamganj districts be declared distressed zones.

Sangsad Chairman Ahad Choudhury in a statement yesterday also called upon the authorities to distribute relief materials among the affected people and to provide medical treatment and shelter to the victims.



Hakim Sayeed arrives tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Hakim Muhammad Sayeed, an internationally reputed physician on herbal medicines and a WHO advisor on herbal medicines and also Hamdard (Pakistan) University Chancellor, arrives in Dhaka tomorrow (Monday) on a four-day visit to Bangladesh.

He will be accompanied by Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr Manzur Ahmed, Chairperson of Hamdard Laboratories, (Waqf) Pakistan, Sodra Rashid and Information Director Ali Hasan, says a press release.

Weather

Temperature may rise

By Staff Correspondent

Under the influence of the active monsoon and a trailing land depression moderate rain or showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind may occur at most places over Chittagong, Barisal and Dhaka divisions and at many places over Khulna and Rajshahi divisions during the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today.

Land depression formed over Bangladesh has moved away northeast wards across Sylhet region yesterday (Saturday).

The Met office forecasts, day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius over the country.

The country's highest temperature yesterday of 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded in Rajshahi and the lowest 23.3 was recorded in Rangpur.

The country experienced rainfall at most of the places. Rainfalls recorded in daytime yesterday were: Teknaf 205 mm, Rangamati 79mm, Chittagong 73mm, Sandwip 64mm, Cox's Bazar 56mm, Sylhet 52mm, and other places below 50mm.

The sun sets today (Sunday) at 6.49 pm and rises tomorrow (Monday) at 5.11 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	27.8	24.8	93	94
Chittagong	28.4	24.0	98	95
Rajshahi	32.5	24.2	90	86
Khulna	31.2	25.4	92	84
Barisal	30.0	25.0	92	97
Cox's Bazar	27.5	25.2	95	97
Sylhet	26.0	24.2	98	97
Dinajpur	27.7	23.6	95	92



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