

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Wounds that are Never Fully Healed

by Iftikhar A Chowdhury

Some wounds are probably so deep that time cannot totally heal them. That is why Sharmin Joarder Shoma struggles to stop the welling up of tears in her eyes, when she relates how she felt about her father, Latefar Hussain Joarder, Principal, Kushtia Darshana College, who accepted martyrdom to liberate his country some twenty-two years ago.



Sharmin Joarder Shoma

Now doing her MA in Psychology from the University of Dhaka, Shoma was only two when her father was taken away to the army barracks on July 31, 1971. She has two younger brothers, one a year younger than she and the other was born in 1972. Shoma's personal impression about her father is somewhat blurred across the curtain of time, whatever she knows about Shaheed Latefar Rahman Joarder was conveyed to her by her near and dear ones. But still she feels deeply for this man who was once forcibly taken away from his family by some lesser human beings, never to be returned. For Shoma, her father epitomizes all the innate qualities that glorify a human life — courage, love and liberty. His memory remains to be of immense importance in Shoma's life. To her, he is not only a father or just another name, but a symbol. A symbol that has always helped her pass through the troubled time.

Politically conscious, Shoma gives vent to her anger by saying that it was an utter betrayal and an act of absolute disrespect for the memories of the martyrs on the part of the nascent government of independent Bangladesh to accord General Amnesty to its war criminals. "If they were duly punished for their atrocities then, now the country's history would have flowed in a positive course." But she emphasizes that after the Mujib government, successive governments did even worse by "rehabilitating the Rajakars and placing them at the helm of affairs." Little had been done for the martyrs and their families till now, she complains.

An active member of Projano Ekattar, an organisation of the children of the martyred people in the war of independence, Shoma believes that pro-independence people or, for that matter, pro-Bangladesh people, have to

assemble on a common platform to fight against Razakars who are now active agents of fundamentalist politics, working and quite successfully trying to penetrate deep into our society in the guise of religious leaders. "We have to remember that these were the same people who conspired against the nation and massacred millions in 1971. Their true identity must be unmasked," says Shoma.

She feels pain to observe how some people are becoming indifferent towards the cause of freedom and independence. "History is constantly being used and abused for serving one's political ends. But we have to set the historical facts in order". Because she thinks that without an authentic national history, no one will know the whole truth of our independence. And younger generations run the risk of becoming nonchalant to matters of such importance. Shoma feels that there is a great necessity to practise the values that their fathers fought and sacrificed their life for and through nurturing these values. "We can collectively fight the threat of fundamentalists and at the same time feel proud to be Bangalees," she added. As members of a 'Shaheed' family, government assistance that they receive through Mukti Joddha Kalyan Trust is "shamefully low and inadequate in today's competitive market". This assistance must be increased. Because it needs to be understood and accepted that if her father survived, her life not only emotionally, but financially too, would have been different, she argues. Most of the people seem to sympathise with her because she had lost a father. But what many people don't want to understand is that girls like Shoma doesn't want anyone's sympathy, she wants respect. For her father's death was not just another death, it was a noble death.

Although her father's memory brings tears to her eyes and she cannot help remembering him all the time, especially at the various turning points of her life, Shoma's mother too, remains to be a constant source of inspiration to her. Because she, through her unbound cares and love has always kept the family together. There's a family united in common sorrows and longings.

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Seminar on Farakka in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Dec 12: Speakers at a seminar here on "Human rights and Farakka problem" called for 'forging a strong national unity to help solve the problem, reports BSS. They said, Farakka being a life and death question for Bangladesh needed a united stand for its just solution. The seminar held under the auspices of Chittagong branch of Bangladesh Association of Journalists for Human Rights was presided over by the branch chairman Kazi Rashid Uddin. Dr Muhammad Mahbubullah of Chittagong University presented a paper.

The participants said, India in violation of all international rules was unilaterally using the water of the Ganges while Bangladesh was facing an environmental problem as it is deprived of the natural flow of the Ganges water because of construction of a huge dam at Farakka inside Indian territory. They also called for taking up the Farakka issue with the international community to pressurise India to come to terms with Bangladesh in this respect.

BTF team calls on Jahan-Ara

Government is determined to create a congenial atmosphere to flourish the national culture, reports UNB.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan-Ara Begum told a delegation of the Bangladesh Theatre Federation (BTF) which called on her at her office yesterday.

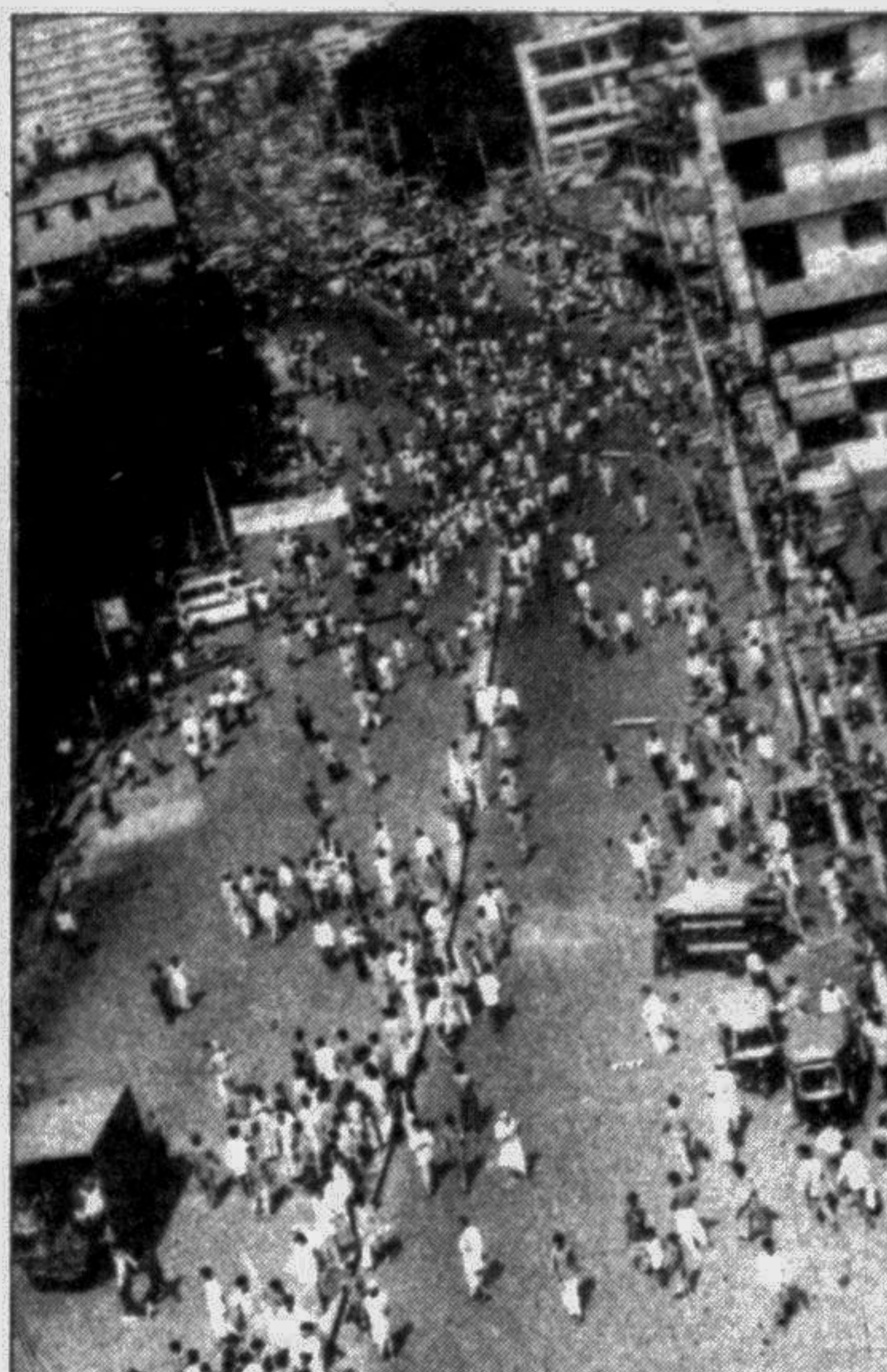
The delegation led by its president Nasiruddin Yusuf discussed various problems for smooth performance of group theatres in the country.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Cultural Secretary Islam Uddin Malik, Director General of the Shilpakala Academy Mobarok Hossain Khan, group theatre leaders Ramendu Majumder, Jamaluddin Hossain.



Monday

- 5:00 Opening announcement: Al-Quran
5:10 Programme summary
5:15 News in Bangla
5:35 Sports programme: Italian Soccer Juventus vs Fiorentina
6:25 Basundhara
6:45 Open University
7:15 Nazrul Sangeet
8:00 News in Bangla
8:30 Special programme on Family Planning
8:35 Fortnight '93: Prottya
8:45 Special Rabindra Sangeet programme: Geet Bitan
10:00 News in English
10:30 Comedy series: Murphy Brown
10:55 Musical programme: Disco Rally
11:30 Khabar/The News
11:40 Tomorrow's programme summary
11:45 Closing



The road between Zero Point near the GPO and Siddique Bazar was temporarily blocked in the morning yesterday by hawkers agitating against their forced eviction from the city footpaths.

Donors reassure support to population sector

Family Planning fortnight will be the platform to launch a detailed plan of activities from national to village level to strengthen the social movement for a small family norm, reports UNB.

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said this yesterday while addressing the representatives of development partners and ambassadors in the cabinet room of Bangladesh Secretariat, as a part of the ob-

Reception to govt college teachers Dec 27

The newly-appointed teachers of the 14th (Special) BCSC cadre in 233 different government colleges will be accorded a reception at the premises of Mirpur Government Bangla College on December 27 at 3 pm, reports UNB.

Education Minister Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar will be present as chief guest at the reception, organised by the Bangladesh Government College Professor and Lecturer Association.

Founder-president of the association Prof Kamal Ataur Rahman and Vice-Principal of Bangla College Prof Majibur Rahman will attend as special guests.

Reflect hopes of people, Biswas tells newsmen

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday called upon the journalists to reflect in their reports and comments the hopes and aspirations of common man as well as the development activities being carried out by the government in various fields, reports UNB.

The President was talking to a seven-member delegation of the Patuakhali Press Club, which called on him at Bangabhaban.

Biswas underlined the role of newsmen in moulding public opinion, upholding rule of law, strengthening the democratic institutions and removing illiteracy from society.

He advised them to motivate the people through their writings to check population boom and undertake income-generating projects for self-employment for overall development of the country. President Biswas said the government had ensured freedom of the press and newsmen should help society through their fair and objective reports and comments.

President of the Press Club Golam Mostofa Talukder, who led the delegation, apprised President Biswas of some of the problems of the club and of the district.

He appealed to the President to help complete a road connecting Barisal with Kuakata, supply an ambulance to the Sadar Hospital, set up a tourist resort at Kuakata, complete construction works of the Press Club building and dredge the local rivers.

President of the Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity Abdul Gafur Mia, Secretary of the Patuakhali

Navy, Air chiefs return

Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam and the Chief of the Air staff air Vice Marshal Altaf Hossain Choudhury returned home Saturday night ending their visits to Malaysia, reports BSS.

During their stay in Malaysia, Admiral Islam and Air Vice Marshal Choudhury witnessed the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA-93) — an international exhibition of military ships and aircraft.

They also called on the Malaysian Defence Minister and met their Malaysian counterparts separately.

In Langkawi, the navy chief hosted a reception on-board the BNS Umar Farooq, a frigate of the Bangladesh Navy which went to Malaysia to participate in the exhibition.

Among others, Bangladesh Minister for Communications Oli Ahmed, Transport Ministers of Fiji, Cambodia and Malaysia, chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Altaf Hossain Choudhury, the Bangladesh High Commissioner to Malaysia Mahboob Alam and senior officials of the participating countries attended the reception.

Sher-e-Bangla a visionary leader: Rafiq

Life and activities of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq and his contributions to the amelioration of the condition of the poor masses were recalled with gratitude at a seminar in the capital yesterday, reports BSS.

Speakers at the seminar, organised by the Sher-e-Bangla Samiti Forum on the occasion of the 22nd anniversary of Victory Day, paid tributes to the great leader, who they said, had dreamt of an exploitation free Bangladesh.

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia addressed the seminar as the chief guest while it was inaugurated by

National Professor Dewan Mohammad Azraf.

He said this great leader perhaps had dreamt of an independent Bangladesh as in the Lahore Resolution in 1947. Sher-e-Bangla made a historic proposal to make Muslim majority areas of the then India into separate independent states.

Presided over by Advocate Nurul Huq Majumder, president of the forum the seminar was also addressed by Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, Chairman of the Press Council, M A Mohaimen, a former MCA, Sher-e-Bangla's son A K Fazlul Huq and Major (ret'd) Afzaruddin.

In his speech, Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia described Sher-e-Bangla as a visionary leader.

The minister said it had to be analysed whether Bangladesh could emerge as an independent country had there been no Pakistan following partition of India in 1947.

Barrister Rafiq said Sher-e-Bangla was one of the front-ranking leaders who had fought for the freedom of India from British rule.

He said this great leader had fought against Zamindari system and established human rights of the downtrodden people.

Weather

Dry weather likely

The Met office forecasts, weather is likely to remain dry with a partly cloudy sky over the northern part of the country during the next 12 hours commencing 6 am today (Monday).

Night temperature may rise slightly over the northern part while likely to remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country.

The country's highest temperature yesterday of 29.4 degrees Celsius was recorded in Kutubdia and the lowest of 13.0 degrees Celsius was recorded in Comilla, Srimangal and Sitakund.

The sun sets today (Monday) at 5:13 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 6:33 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and relative humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Table with 5 columns: Cities/Towns, Temperature in degrees Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (9 am, 6 pm). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Dinajpur.

Tender Notice

Tender Notice Number-6/1993-94. Table with columns: Reach No, Name of Work & Location, Estimated Cost (Tk), Earnest Money (Tk), Time Allowed, Eligibility of Contractor/Contractors. Includes details for construction work on embankment.

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A scene of a play 'Crossfire in the Crossroad' staged at the Dhaka Medical College auditorium recently. The Medicos, a drama group of the college, arranged the theatrical production.

Happy Marriage Anniversary to ABBU & AMMU. From: Kashfee & Babunto. Happy Birthday to SAMIRA. Happy Birthday to SAAMIYA. with lots of love and blessings. From: Abbu, Ammu & Sarah.