

Dhaka Day by Day

From a time of Sacrifice and Valour

by Aasha Mehreen Amin.

For someone with a title like 'Bhasha Shainik', Gazil Huq needs no introduction. Being one of the prime actors of the Language Movement, his memories of that time, 43 years ago, are as fresh as if it had happened only the other day.

He begins with February 20th when a rumour was circulated that some student leaders and workers would be arrested. At one o'clock in the morning on February 21st eleven Dhaka University students, Huq included, decided that they would defy the famous Section 144 code. The students were to start 'Satyagraha' that is to meet in groups of ten.

"Abdul Momen, one of the student leaders accompanied me and we scaled the walls of the DU campus to reach the building (now Dhaka Medical College) and I spent the night on the staircase, says Huq.

"On February 21st," Huq continues, "after lathi charging and tear-gassing the campus, the police fired on the students, after which the situation was extremely tense. That night I stayed at the Medical College Barrack Hostel. From the morning onwards that day, there were processions after processions of people from all walks of life, pro-testing the firing."

With the military ransacking the halls on February 25th, looking for student leaders and then trampling the Shaheed Minar, Huq had no other option but to stay in hiding taking shelter at various houses and then later fleeing to Sherpur. "The faces of my dead friends and the image of the Shaheed Minar being trampled on, were so fresh in my mind that I couldn't think of any thing else not even my own safety" It was while hiding in a house in Hatkhola that he composed a song "Bifalbo na Ekushe February."

So what happened to all that idealism, the spirit of sacrifice that made young people risk their lives for a common cause? Comparing the mental make up of youth of today with those of '52, Huq points out the answer to the question: financial dependence. In other words, nowadays students are financially backed by political parties and so are manipulated into doing things that would normally contradict their principles.

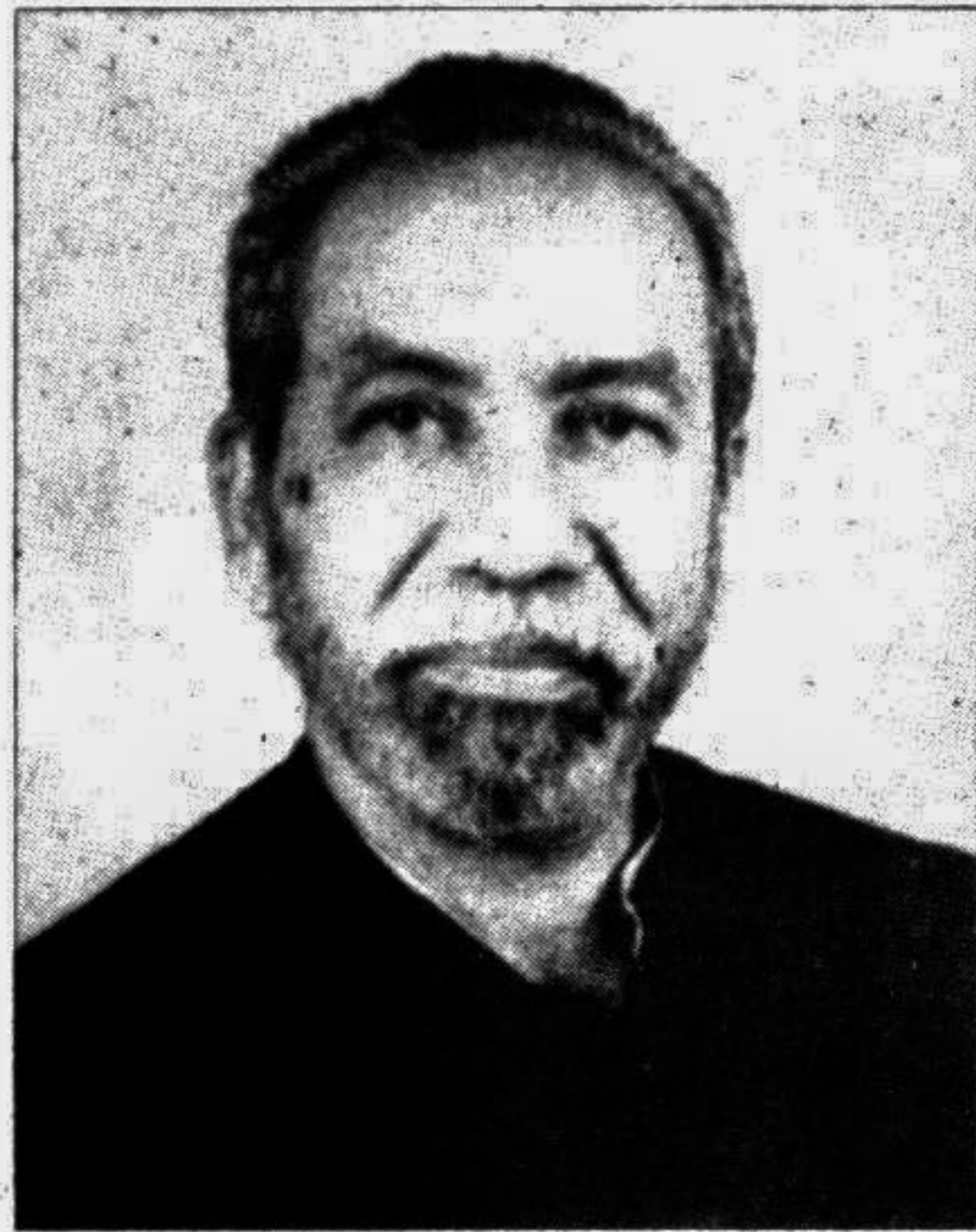
"During the '52 movement and the movements '69 and '71 the students were imbued

with political idealism and the ruling party, or any other party completely failed to bribe the students or the masses." But the situation says Huq was different during various periods such as after '58 onwards when autocratic governments attempted to ban politics which, according to him, is the main instrument through which a society can become democratic. This period of autocracy mirrored again in the eighties, says Huq, induced many students to support undemocratic forces and so become corrupt.

"In the 50s and 60s and beginning of the 70's the goal was to achieve something, namely freedom and this spirit to fight for a noble cause formed a strong bond of unity among people, including students. Later, Huq explains, students fell victim to the politics of power, money and self interest, a trend that has survived till today. Political parties have named student organisations working for them and students being financially dependent on political parties, have discredited their values. "Once they have tasted the benefits of corruption it is very difficult for them to change their faces. When you take financial

help from someone you must support your financier even if it means sacrificing your ideals. That's what's happening now."

This absence of idealism and true spirit of patriotism is apparent even in the way Ekushe February is observed. Political bigwigs and other people physically tackle each other at the Shaheed Minar to be the first one to place the biggest wreath on the Minar, making sure the T.V cameras are on them while hoodlums use this day as an opportunity to hijack people of their belongings and molest young women. Is this what we have learnt from the movement as sacred as the Language Movement? Huq prescribes a different way of observing the day. "We should observe it with maximum restraint, maybe even in a joyous mood for the victory it signifies but always remembering the sacrifice of the martyrs. Yet the observance of 21st February should not be a formality. On this day, the history of nationalism, nationhood and liberation should be discussed in seminars and people should be taught to sacrifice their own interests for the greater interest of the nation. We must always try to learn that we live not only for ourselves but for others too."



Professor M Harun-Ur-Rashid, Director General of Bangla Academy speaking at the publication ceremony of the book 'Rano Theke Jano', an autobiography of Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman at a local hotel yesterday.

— Star photo

Weather

Dry spell likely

Dry weather is likely to prevail across the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met office says night temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

In its outlook for tomorrow the Met Office predicted little change. Giving extended outlook for another five days weathermen forecast rise in night temperature and thunderstorm activity.

Country's lowest temperature 8.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Srimangal while the highest 28.8 degrees at Teknaf and Sathkira.

The Sun sets today at 5:55 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:29 am.

The minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Degree Celsius		Humidity in Percentage	
	Min	Max	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	13.6	27.6	60	40
Chittagong	16.5	27.7	73	40
Rajshahi	11.0	26.6	70	54
Khulna	12.4	28.6	66	58
Barisal	15.0	27.6	73	47
Sylhet	13.6	25.8	79	47
Cox's Bazar	17.0	28.5	48	56

CUJ polls today

CHITTAGONG, Feb 17: The election of the executive committee of the Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) will be held tomorrow, reports BSS.

According to a press release of the CUJ, the poll will begin at 10 am and continue till 3pm without break.

Meanwhile, the annual general meeting of the CUJ was held at its Jamal Khan temporary office today with poet and journalist Abul Momen in the chair.

Anjan Kumer Sen and SM Ibrahim, outgoing general secretary and treasurer of the CUJ presented their respective annual reports.

MUNA
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HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA DHAKA

SAARC FELLOWSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Government of India, will offer one SAARC Fellowship and two SAARC Scholarships to Bangladeshi students this year. These Scholarships /Fellowship are available for regular post-graduate courses as well as for M. Phil, Ph.D and post doctoral research courses.

- Bangladeshi students interested in applying for the above Scholarships/Fellowship are requested to route their applications through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh.
- Application are also informed that a copy of their application must simultaneously be sent to Frist Secretary (Information), High Commission of India, Dhaka failing which their application will not be processed.
- The application should have secured over 70% in their HSC examination. Candidates applying for regular post-graduate courses must have a first-class Bachelors degree from a recognised university. Candidates applying for M. Phil and Ph.D degrees must, in addition, have a first-class Masters degree from a recognised university. Candidates applying to the post-doctoral Fellowship programme must possess the above requirements including a Ph.D from a recognised university.
- Applications forms can be obtained either through the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs or from the Information Wing, High Commission of India, Road No.3, DRA, Dhaka.
- Last date for receipt of completed applications is 15th March, 1995.
- For further information, please contact Information Wing, High Commission of India, Dhaka either personally or on phone (865096 or 507743).

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বিনামূল্যে চিনি

প্রতি লিটার কোকা-কোলা, স্প্রাইট ও ফান্টা
বোতলসহ পানীয় কিনলে
পাবেন ২০০ গ্রাম চিনি
দুইটি বোতল ভরলেও পাবেন ২০০ গ্রাম চিনি।

হৃৎতারে তৃপ্তি ও সাধন