

Dhaka Day by Day

Telephone Tragi-comedies

by Farah Ghuznavi

The evils of the Dhaka telephone system are fairly well known to most of us, and little more needs to be said about them. But in addition to all of the other problems with the phone system, hapless Dhakaites continue to be victims of that long time oppressor, the crank caller. There is nothing that unusual, of course, about Dhaka dwellers being the victims of such callers. In virtually every place where more than one telephone exists, such callers also exist. But perhaps the most unusual thing about the pranksters in our great metropolis is the wide range of approaches that they adopt.

to the gentleman who answered the phone earlier. Put him on immediately!"

Since the man could only have been referring to my father, and I didn't like his manner, I asked him whom he wanted to speak to. He was unable to give me the name, but again said, "The man who picked up the phone last time." When I asked him why he wanted to speak to him, he said, "Never mind. You don't have to understand! Just call him here. I don't want to talk to you, or to any other woman! Do you understand? I want him! Who is he?" That was the final straw for me! Not only did this creep have nothing better to do than harass exhausted people at night, he was trying to get funny with my poor father! "You should be ashamed of yourself!" I shouted back, "Calling and bothering someone who is old enough to be your father. Of course I am not going to call my father to come and talk to you, you idiot! Go to hell!" and I hung up. Somewhat to my surprise, he didn't ring back.

For example you have that old favourite, where you crawl out of bed and race to pick up the phone at six am or twelve at night, thinking (hoping) that your long lost friend/relative might be calling you from *biदेश* after such a long time. As you blearily try to calculate the possible time zones from which a call at this hour might be feasible, loud (and invariably offensive) pop music starts blaring into your ear, and you realise that yet again, a prankster has struck! Whoever said that music soothes the savage beast was definitely not thinking about this situation. ...

The next day, I came back to find my cousin's eighteen year old daughter (who was staying with us for a few days) telling me, "Oh, you know, some guy called today and apologised to me for bothering my father last night. It must have been the same guy whose call you answered! Anyway, I said to him very sharply, 'You didn't talk to me, you talked to my aunt. And that is my greatniece (Nana) that you were bothering!' He was completely mortified, and begged me to apologise to you and Nana on his behalf. He said he thought he had gone mad or something, but that he'd just wanted to discuss his emotional problems with another man, and that's why he'd wanted to talk to your father!"

Then of course, there is always that witty conversationalist (who calls at all hours, and usually states the right number), who replies to your query of who they want to speak to ("Kakey chan?"), with wildly original and invariably annoying statement of, "I want you" ("*Apanakey chan!*"). And that too, with all of the slimy innuendo they can muster!

Certainly, that was the most original excuse I'd ever heard for a crank call. All I can say is, with all these lunatics running around abusing the phone, it reminded me of two lines from an eighties pop song about such callers, which went, "If Alexander Bell were alive today, would he want the telephone to be used this way? Somehow, I think not."



JU Senate meets

The adjourned session of the Jahangirnagar University Senate begins this morning, reports UNB.

Death anniversary

Tomorrow is the first death anniversary of noted journalist Abdul Wahab, reports BSS.

BISS stipend for 3 IR fellows

The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) has awarded scholarships to three students for their post-graduate studies in international relations, reports UNB.

QULKHANI

Begum Kamiza Khatun, mother of Mr. M. A. Kashem, renowned industrialist, Chairman of Southeast Bank Ltd and former President of FBCCI had died on Wednesday, July 12, 1995 due to her old age (Inna Lillahe-wa-Inna Illaihe Rajoun). She was 98. Late Begum Kamiza Khatun was buried at her family graveyard of Dakhsin Ballavpur under Chagolnaiya Thana of Feni District. Her Qulkhani will be held on Saturday, July 15, 1995 after Asar Prayer in the residence of Mr. M. A. Kashem at House # 82, Road # 14, Block-B, Banani, Dhaka.

All relatives, well-wishers, friends and others are requested to attend the Qulkhani and pray for peace of her departed soul.

The recipients are Anwar Zahid for Ph D, Delwar Hossain and Iktihar Jahan Kabir for M Phil.

The scholarship programme will begin from mid-July.

The fellows at the Ph D-level will get a monthly stipend of Tk 6,000 for three years and those at M Phil level will be provided with Tk 4,000 per month for two years, said a press release.

BISS has introduced the scholarship programme in collaboration with the Department of International Relations of Dhaka University.

First of its kind in Bangladesh, the programme aims at promoting research in international and strategic studies.

The programme is sponsored by the Ford Foundation. Selection procedure starts in November every year, the press release added.

Accreditation

The government has decided to concurrently accredit Syed Muazzem Ali, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Iran as the Ambassador to Turkmenistan, reports UNB.



The namaz-e-janaza of Attorney General Aminul Huq was held at the High Court premises in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Life-sketch of Aminul Huq

By Staff Correspondent

Late Aminul Huq was one of the longest serving Attorney Generals of Bangladesh.

A leading lawyer of the country, he upheld the status of the position with a high standard of professionalism and dignity. Throughout his long and chequered career, which spanned over three decades, Aminul Huq always fought for progressive causes and was a staunch defender of human rights.

Brother of Sergeant Zahurul Huq, he was also a valiant freedom fighter in the country's Liberation War. One of the accused in the so-called "Agartala Conspiracy Case", Zahurul Huq was killed in a prison at the Dhaka Cantonment in 1969.

Aminul Huq was appointed to the post by the interim government of President Shahabuddin Ahmed on December 18, 1990 and served in the position till his sudden death. He offered to resign immediately after the elected BNP government came to power, but agreed to continue at the request of Prime Minister Begum Khaleka Zia.

During his tenure, Aminul Huq led the government prosecution in a number of important cases, including the cases against former president H M Ershad.

At the time of his death he was the Chairman of the Bangladesh Bar Association, a Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court and Vice President of the All-Asia Bar Association.

An MA in Economics and an LLB, he enrolled as an Advocate of the High Court in 1962 and as an Attorney of the Supreme Court in 1967.

In his long legal career, Aminul Huq conducted a number of *habeas corpus* cases, free of charge, for the release of political prisoners detained without trial. They included the cases of Col (ret) Shawkat Ali, late Fani Bhushan Majumder, Comrade Farhad, Abdur Razzak, Sajeda Choudhury, late Col (ret) M A Taher, A S M Abdur Rab and Major (ret) M A Jalil.

Aminul Huq was also a member of the local Amnesty International Lawyers' Association, a former member of the Dhaka University Senate, Vice Chairman of the Bangladesh Bar Council and former Chairman of the Bangladesh Bar Council Tribunal.

He left behind his wife Farida Akhter, an Associate Professor of the Jagannath Government College, and two sons.

Death conduced

Ministers, political leaders and different organisations in separate messages condoled the sudden death of Attorney General Aminul Huq yesterday, report agencies.

Deputy Leader of the Parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury today expressed his deep shock at the sudden death of Attorney General Aminul Huq.

He conveyed his heart-felt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz ex-

pressed deep sorrow at the sudden death of the Attorney General Aminul Huq.

In a condolence message the minister said that, at his death the country lost a veteran lawyer.

Water Resources Minister M Majid-Ul-Huq condoled the death.

He also recalled with respect the role of Huq as the attorney general during the present government.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Choudhury expressed his profound shock at the death of Attorney General Aminul Huq.

In a condolence message, the home minister said, Huq was a personality bedecked with honesty, sincerity, efficiency and deep patriotism.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman expressed his profound shock at the sudden death of Huq.

Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar deeply condoled the death.

He visited the residence of Huq and expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Minister for Commerce and Information M Shamsul Islam expressed his deep shock at the sudden demise of Aminul Huq.

In his message of condolence, the minister recalled the long active career of Huq and said his death is an irreparable loss to the nation.

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain and State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan expressed their deep shock at the death of Aminul Huq.

Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia condoled the sudden death of Huq. The minister recalled his association with Huq and said, he was a friend to every lawyer despite difference of opinion.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed expressed deep sorrow at the sad demise of advocate Aminul Huq.

He would be remembered for his role as a lawyer in establishing the rule of law, he added.

Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf expressed his profound grief at the death of Aminul Huq.

The health minister said, at the death of Huq the country lost a talented son and a man of rare quality. The void created due to his death will be difficult to fill in, the minister added.

Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan expressed his deep shock at the death. The minister conveyed deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Mohammad Hanif in a statement condoled the death of Aminul Huq and expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Hanif visited the residence of the deceased and consoled the members of the bereaved family.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan Ara Begum expressed deep shock at the sudden death of

Aminul Huq.

She conveyed her heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for his eternal peace.

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Harun Al Rashid expressed deep shock at the sudden demise of the attorney general.

Recalling the contribution of Huq, the state minister said he served the people and the country with utmost sincerity. The death of Huq is an irreparable loss to the nation, he added.

Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Khandker Delwar Hossain yesterday condoled the death.

Delwar recalled his association with Huq as a colleague and said, his death is an irreparable loss to the country.

Chairman of the Multijoddha Sanghati Parishad and Awami League leader Shawkat Ali condoled the death.

Different bar associations and professional bodies in separate statements condoled the death of Huq.

The Bangladesh Bar Council in an emergency meeting with Shamsul Huq Chowdhury in the chair prayed for the peace of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

The Bangladesh Metropolitan Bar Association in a meeting said the death of Huq is an irreparable loss to the legal profession.

The Bangladesh Manabdhikar Ainjibi Forum, National Front, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Ain O Shalish Kendra in separate statements also condoled the death.

Secretary general of the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) advocate Sigma Huda expressed condolence at the death of Huq.

She said his death is an irreparable loss to the legal profession. She expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

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WORLD BANK VACANCY

Position: Local Consultant (Nutrition)

Background: The World Bank has signed a Development Credit Agreement with the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) to provide assistance towards financing the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project (BINP) which is due to start activities from August 1995. The Project consists of: (i) National level nutrition activities including IEC; (ii) Community-based nutrition component; and (iii) Inter-sectoral nutrition program development. The Project will be supervised and monitored from the perspective of the World Bank by its Population and Health Office (PHO) situated in the Bank's Resident Mission in Bangladesh (RMB).

Tasks: The local consultant will be responsible to the Chief of the PHO in Dhaka and the Task Manager of BINP in Washington, and will assist them in the supervision and monitoring of the Project. More specifically, the Local consultant will assist in the supervision of BINP by: (i) maintaining effective dialogue with GOB, UNICEF and NGOs on the implementation of the Project; (ii) helping the Project Director solve problems, get appropriate technical assistance when needed and guide the project staff on Bank procedures; (iii) reviewing technical documents related to the Project including proposals for inter-sectoral components, and periodic progress and monitoring reports; (iv) helping in the drafting of TORs, research or study proposals, etc.; (v) reviewing procurement bids, withdrawal applications, accounts, audit reports and covenants to ensure that they are in line with World Bank's requirements and project specifications; (vi) taking active part in national level seminars and workshops on broader issues of nutrition; (vii) preparing background documentation for Supervision Missions and participating in such missions; (viii) advising the Chief of PHO and the Task Manager of problems and issues which cannot be resolved by the PD or the Consultant and need to be taken up with the GOB at a higher level; (ix) liaising actively with GOB officials and UN colleagues working in the nutrition sector; and (x) carrying out any other duty related to the BINP or to the nutrition sector which the supervisors consider necessary.

Qualifications and Experience: The long-term consultant will be a Bangladeshi national with a relevant postgraduate qualification in nutrition, and must have at least 8 years of national, preferably also international, experience in the field of human nutrition. Experience of working with community based nutrition programs will be preferred.

The person chosen would be recruited initially on a one-year contract which would be extended provided performance is satisfactory. For administrative matters the consultant will be responsible to the Chief of Mission and the Manager Administration at the RMB through the Chief of PHO. Applications with complete curriculum vitae and contact telephone number should be addressed to:

World Bank Resident Mission
Ref. Local Consultant (Nutrition)
3A Paribagh, Dhaka

Deadline: Application should be submitted by July 31, 1995

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