

Dhaka Day by Day

Under the Prying Eyes

by Ambrosia

"Curiosity kills the cat", as the saying goes. I don't know how the felines feel about this thousand-year-old adage, but I can tell it for sure that the Dhakaites are not at all daunted by this ominous aphorism. Whatever befalls, the Dhakaites will always eavesdrop on a conversation, peep through a key hole and so on and so forth. Although a typical dweller of this metropolis takes little interest in arts, literature and science, the sanctity of libraries, galleries and museums manifests this unpalatable truth (he for she) would pry into other people's private life with alacrity. Even the most refined one can't resist the temptation of doing these reprehensible things.

Have you ever had the experience of living in a household where one of those no good sneaky characters lurks about? No? Then thank your stars! If you never ever had that misfortune, you won't be able to realise the plights of the hapless mortals. Nor will you be able to commiserate with them on their absolute loss of privacy. You (the fortunate ones) can take my word for it that nothing else can jeopardise a mortal's sanity, mental peace and privacy more than a prying eye does.

The other day, my friend Samia was lamenting this ill-fortune. Poor lady! She has some *nanads* (sisters-in-law) who are dreadful busy-bodies. Recently, she was petrified to find out that one of them has the despicable habit of clandestinely reading her diary. Lipika, another friend of mine, was outraged to discover that the lady who lives in the next apartment to her, frequently raids her letter-box. Lipika and Whisan, being newly weds, exchange myriads of passionate letters that teem with lavish endearments. No doubt these "billets-doux" are a compelling "study" to a prying eye.

Perhaps this god-forsaken metropolis contains the most scandalmongers in the world because the Dhakaites are scandal-loving people. Oh! How deeply do they love scandals! The worse the scandals are, the better they appeal to their vulgar taste. That is why the nosy parkers of Dhaka make it their constant

endeavour to seek out flaws in a person's character. Even a man with an immaculate character cannot dream of going scot-free. The nosy parkers would then unleash their wild imagination and eventually, concoct such a saucy gossip as would make the poor soul cry out in despair.

"Dharant Ddha Hou!" (Let the earth shrink with shame).

For a peculiar reason, the gossip-mongers prefer to victimise the women-folk.

A gossip becomes much more lively when it revolves around a woman; and if that woman is young and considerably beautiful, then the gossip becomes really crappy. In their frenzied effort to victimise the woman, they very often end up harrowing the innocent one. A distant cousin of mine divorced her husband because he had an extra-marital affair with

his secretary. As usual, this incident set the tongues wagging. But astonishingly, most of these aspersions were launched against my cousin (incidentally, who is a lady of enviable pulchritude). The gossips were so vicious that my poor cousin was compelled to shun social gatherings just to avert the contemptuous and cynical glances of the unfeeling people. While she passed her days in a literal confinement, her ex-husband went on with his social life in full swing. What an irony!

Although the citizens of the other metropolises of the world are used to scandal-mongering, the citizens of this particular megapolis have turned slandering and back-biting into "fine arts". Why, back-biting has almost become our favourite national pastime! Back-stabbing, rat-finking are now an inseparable part of our urban culture.

No matter how vehemently you anathematise them, the nosy parkers of Dhaka will keep on haunting your private domain till the end of time. So what else can be done besides cursing like hell? It's very simple! Just follow this pithy maxim:

"If you can't beat them, join them!"



Noted freedom fighter Qader Siddiqui, Bir Uttam, speaking at a function organised to mark the 25-year anniversary of the Mujibnagar government. — Star photo

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Call to rekindle spirit of '71

Awami League presidium member Syeda Zohra Tajuddin yesterday called for unity of the pre-liberation forces to establish the spirit of the Liberation War in the country, reports BSS.

"The nation would achieve economic emancipation, and democracy could be given an institutional shape only if the spirit of the Liberation War is established in the country, she told a rally of freedom fighters in front of the Institution of Engineers here.

Organised by the "Muktijoddha Mancha" the rally was presided over by noted freedom fighter Qader Siddiqui. It was also addressed by Gano Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain and former vice-chancellor of the Dhaka University Prof Abdul Mannan.

Syeda Zohra Tajuddin said that the assassination of

Bangabandhu and four national leaders were a deep rooted conspiracy to revert the history of the Liberation War.

She said there was conspiracy even in the Mujibnagar Government itself.

Dr Kamal Hossain said the people of Bangladesh had fought the Liberation War unitedly at the call of Bangabandhu.

He observed that with the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975 the people were thrown out of power.

He emphasised the need for greater unity of the freedom fighters at this hour of need.

Qader Siddiqui said, the freedom fighters must have a role to play in the elections and also in running the country.

Siddiqui said, he would continue to work for organising the freedom fighters to carry forward the causes for

which the people had fought in 1971.

He said that he had protested when some people took oath keeping the mortal remains of Bangabandhu.

Siddiqui said there was no room for compromise on the point of principle.

Discussion on Ctg Youth Revolution

Masterda Surya Sen Parishad yesterday organised a discussion to observe the 66th anniversary of Chittagong Youth Revolution and Battle of Jalalabad Hills in the TSC auditorium here a press release said.

The speakers at the meeting said that the revolutionary spirit of Masterda Surya Sen inspired the freedom fighters in the war of independence in 1971. They demanded for naming a road in Dhaka after Surya Sen.

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