

W e i r d PROFESSIONS

By The Lizard King

Bangladesh is inhabited by 130 million people. Oops! Allow me to rephrase that: one hundred and thirty million geni/geniuses (which ever is correct). Struggle is like a middle name of this nation whose large portion of people strive to make both ends meet.

The saying "Necessity is the mother of all invention" is more true in Bangladesh than any other place in the face of the earth. This 'doomed city' of ours thus experiences a flood of people from villages in hopes of a better tomorrow. Needless to say, their dreams get shattered within a few days. Fortunately by the grace of God, ingenuity is inherent to these people; needfulness is on their side and thus these creative sons of the soil have come up with some of the weirdest means of earning a living. Weird is a great understatement—uncanny, absurd and wacky possibly suits it better!

The article that you are about to read (or discard) is only an attempt of miniature proportion on this lizard's part, to presents these professions that are beyond any reasonable doubt, unique to this city!

Le guide de la Bongs

This new brand of professionals range from the age of 10 to 30. Found in the outskirts of Dhaka (not really) or in front of the Bongs itself, these learned guides, guide foreigners into the great Bangladesh fashion

statement BONGSI (those of you who are yet to fathom the meaning this word recently included in the VERSACE WORLD FASHION DICTIONARY. Bongs is our very own Bongo Bazar!) The Bongs, as any fashion lover would appreciate is a buyer's nightmare. It takes years of wondering and 'getting robbed in broad daylight' before one can understand the weird economic principle that Bongs has followed over the years and continues to do so. Keeping the pride and glory of Bongs the 'friendly' shop attendants feel reluctant to lower their prices even for those of us who are *klash bongo shontan* let alone the foreigners. Thus to help our fellow earthlings from abroad, Bangladesh Foreigner Welfare Association (BFWA) had initiated this new service that not only helps foreigners shop in peace but also ensures a fair bargain.

Chappas Walla Wallious

The usage of Henna in the decoration of palms and as hair dye is no less than a thousand years old. But due to our deforestation problem... this no longer comes cheap. However the urge for decoration for a cool look still remains within the low-income group and hence the profession of *chappa walla-wallious* has blossomed. Mostly found in Gullistan, Farm-gate and such places these beauticians sit on the footpaths displaying their array of blocks

curved with decorative designs. The blocks are soaked in a red pigment made from *Allah janey ki* and the impression is stamped on the hands of the interested customers. Strangely enough it looks quite attractive tool It has been learned by this correspondent that the renowned beauticians of the country are seriously considering the 'chappa look' for the new millennium.



BITE YOUR OWN BACK!

By Mohd. Naved Ferdaus Iqbal

ROMANS, FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN, lend me your ears." This is to bring to your attention to the fact that there is a lot of eve-teasing, bad mouthing and backbiting going in and around your environment. Even you may be unknowingly involved in doing the latter two, let's hope not.

We can't draw generalizations regarding human nature but apart from eccentricity, observation of human nature enables us to classify human behavior. For instance, it is highly probable that eve teasers are not only bad mouthers but also backbiters. Bad mouthers are not necessarily eve teasers and the same applies to the case of backbiters.

A great deal has been written about eve teasing and so I shall skip that part. Now, badmouthing is very commonplace, especially that concerned with the opposite sex, among a group of friends. You may argue that bad mouthing is something you can't help when you and your friends get together. You may simply love to badmouth others. But try thinking it this way. There is every scope of the other group bad mouthing you. You may not care but please do so. If you care, you would not be bad mouthing and so won't your friends. But why should you care after all? Even if you stop bad mouthing others, they may not stop bad mouthing you? What can you do about that? Maybe you can do nothing other than act irritated, which makes it worse. However there might be something you can do after all. You can be different from them and thus try to act as a perfect gentleman. Now, who wouldn't want to be a perfect gentleman? Don't misinterpret the distinction between gentleness and wackiness. You may not like to dress as a gentleman but you can behave like one. You can even be wacky and still be a perfect gentleman. Other than keeping aloof from bad mouthing, a gentleman doesn't read other's letter even if it's not sealed. Now as I am talking about being a perfect gentleman, there is no point in thinking that girls are all (gentle) ladies. They badmouth as much as boys do and the same proposal goes for them too. You may wonder why I have used the word "proposal" instead of "advice". Well, it's because advice is something we don't like to listen to but we never mind listening to proposals. So I am proposing that bad mouthers become perfect ladies and gentlemen.

Now, let's focus on the backbiters. These people are very treacherous. They wear a false face before those they backbite. The most disgusting thing about these people is that they don't admit the fact that backbiting is bad. In fact, they try to give explanations as to why they should backbite and how good it actually is. They argue that they are not backbiting but telling an embarrassing truth about some person. Fine; they are not making things up about the person they are talking about. They are simply exposing some truths about him which otherwise would have better been kept undisclosed. But the fact is how honest these backbiters are in talking about their very selves? Do they have the guts to expose all the embarrassing truths about themselves? They sure don't have the guts to do that because they are all cowards who talk ill of people in their absence. And besides, what purpose does it serve to expose embarrassing truths about people? Why can't backbiters just mind their own business instead of learning and sharing upsetting facts about others? Well if they can't help backbiting because it's their hobby, then the only advice to them is BITE YOUR OWN BACK!

Oil_o_Pathy

The health condition of the people of Bangladesh is not something to be proud of thanks to our age-old custom of Boney Badarey Kam Shara and such. To provide remedies for this *baraimma jati* of ours, a great variety of medical sciences have evolved- alopahy, homeopathy, patthor-pathy, pani-pathy so on and so forth. The oil_o_pathy is a new inclusion to this long list of existing pathies.

The formula for this...ahem...most scientific medical field of the modern era is believed to be dream-found (*shopney paau Moga Oushodhi*)! This however should not be a great surprise. After all we ARE a nation of dreamers! The medication involved in this pathy uses the oil extracted from the body of Foxes, Snakes, Lizards (not this one), Mongoose and jokes (leeches to be exact). The manner with which this *^OIL^* is extracted from these helpless creatures is as good as anybody's guess.

Weigh_ur_weight

Being the most common of all weird professions, this particular career is severely underrated. The Bangladeshis are traditionally 'severely underweight' and hence their eagerness in weight measurement. Today, found in almost every streets of Dhaka these pros sit with their weighing machines eagerly awaiting the arrival of a 'tal patar shepa' to have his/her weight measured.

Besides being philanthropic these weight measurers also act as scientists doing serious research in The Universal Law of Gravitation. As no two machines will give the same result, there is ample scope of further study!

Dig_an_ear

NO...no...this is not a distant cousin of the *oitijhobahi* buccaneers! It is a complete novelty found exclusively on the streets of Dhaka. Although considered an art by its practitioners, the habit of *kan khochano* is beyond

any reasonable doubt one of the filthiest *Bangalee shobhabs*. Nevertheless, this 'art' has been specialized upon and well exercised in places like Gullistan and Nilkhet. The crafty practitioners roam around these places with their gadgets which includes forceps, *Gingira* made especial ear-solution, cotton and god knows what not. A small fee ranging from Tk. 2-5 is charged per dig.

One note of caution: Boys and Girls do not try this at home. As a dig may clear more than your intended *Kholl*...namely your eardrum!

Nostradamous Wannabe

What does the future hold? Only time will tell...not anymore folks cause the nostradamous wannabes are in town. Accompanied by their psychic parrots and pigeons (the latest inclusion) these *pakhals* foretell people's future and thus help society in general.

Desperate people like yours truly are their major clients, who seek the help of these soothsayer parrots (the *pakhals* are only messengers) and they predict in style! The whole process is quite a sight...believe me. You people should try it out sometime.

Rent_A_Hogla

Love dudes and dudettes of the city are already more than familiar with this service. Franchised exclusively within the confines of the city parks and such 'open air' lover's den, this unique service has greatly benefited the love-movement of Bangladesh. Those of you who are unaware...Bangladesh is one of the prime target of Cupid with thousands of people falling victim to his lethal arrow every year. All his followers congregate in these places like migratory birds in sanctuaries. Adam & Eve had the Garden of Eden to continue their love talk... and we Bengal mortals have our parks. PRAISE THE LORD! In order to chat and gossip people require a place to sit and the lush green grass of Ramna poses a problem. Wallah! In comes the *hogla-bhara-party* and the inconvenience is finally resolved.