

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Malcolm Gladwell and the Deshi Mother

WE all know that to achieve greatness whether in the arts or sciences, in business, or in public service one has to work awfully hard. There are no shortcuts. But how much work is really needed? Some say five years; others fifteen. We may look to history for clues. The Taj Mahal took 22 years to build, but the Dome of Florence took over 140. Dhaka's Baldha Garden was a 34-year job. James Joyce wrote Ulysses in seven years. So, historical data is no help.

But now, amazingly, a consensus has emerged for how much work is needed to attain greatness. It comes from Malcolm Gladwell.

Named by *Newsweek* as one of the most influential "thought leaders" of the last decade, Gladwell is a writer. His (non-fiction) books include *Outliers*.

In *Outliers*, Gladwell analyzes several successful people, including Bill Gates and The Beatles. What makes this book unique is that Gladwell quantifies the work needed to attain success. He claims that a minimum of 10,000 hours of work are needed, basing it on the work The Beatles and others did before they achieved greatness.

This "10,000 hours" has morphed into a benchmark for the world's ambitious. A Google search reveals thousands of people, from violin players with Carnegie Hall dreams to middle-aged marathon runners, who see their deliverance in this magic number.

Besides hard work, *Outliers* examines, in detail, other factors necessary for success: talent, timing (in economic cycle), luck, and family support and wealth. Gates apparently had all of these including a devoted Mother's Club at his school which started him on his 10,000 hours on computers.

So how do Bangladeshis measure up to Gladwell's success factors?

Agriculture works to our advantage. Gladwell claims that owing to the intense, round-the-year



Off to school. Do their mothers provide a competitive advantage to Bangladeshi children?

labour necessary in rice fields, hard work is built into the genes of the nations which produce rice. Indeed, those who once dismissed Bangladesh as a basket case are now eating their own words because of the hard work of Bangladeshis in building this nation.

How about timing? In recent years Bangladesh has achieved sustained economic growth. Many more opportunities for greatness come during economic expansion, says Gladwell.

What about family support and wealth? True, most families here are far from wealthy. However, can they make up for it in support?

As an example, I offer the

Bangladeshi mother. Rising before the sun, she makes breakfast and tiffin, irons her child's school uniform, gets her child ready, feeds it, finds a rickshaw, and braves traffic jams, flooded roads, inclement weather, potholes and wayward buses to deliver the child at the school's door. A few hours later, she picks up her child, feeds him or her, and drops him or her at the tutor's after a change of clothes. This daily cycle repeats for years.

If a Mothers' Club handed Bill Gates his crucial competitive advantage, who is to say the dedication of our mothers will not produce another Bill Gates or Beatles?

Part of under-construction building collapses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A portion of the first floor of the under-construction Navana Zohura Square building collapsed at the city's Bangla Motor yesterday morning.

Witnesses said they heard a big sound and saw a large portion of the floor, cast a few minutes ago, collapsing.

The building has four floors of which three are basements and the under-construction first floor.

Ariful Islam Hanif, a witness, saw the incident while having tea at a roadside stall in Bangla Motor.

"I heard a big sound continue for about a minute and saw a portion of that under-construction floor collapsing down. I rushed to the foot-over bridge for a better view and saw construction labourers and officials quickly covering the building with jute sacks," he said.

The project's officials, who declined to comments, prevented this correspondent from visiting the building.

Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Shahidul Islam of Shahbagh Police Station visited the spot.

Quoting project officials of Navana Real Estate Company, he told The Daily Star that some supporting columns of the floor collapsed just as they (the officials) were leaving after completing the floor's construction.

The ASI said the officials claimed there were no casualties in the incident.



A portion of the first floor of the under-construction Navana Zohura Square building that collapsed at Bangla Motor in the city yesterday morning.

China to build Ctg-Kunming road, rail link

BSS, Dhaka

China will construct road and railway link between Chittagong and Kunming via Myanmar to boost Sino-Bangladesh cooperation.

Assistant Minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China Liu Zhen told visiting Bangladesh State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud at a meeting in Beijing yesterday.

Liu proposed to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the fields of trade, transportation and climate change.

He showed keen interest in the development of road and rail communications between Chittagong and Kunming, capital of Yunnan province in China.

Hasan emphasised the urgency of development of the planned deep sea-port in Sonadia, Cox's Bazar and sought support of the Chinese government in this regard.

The two ministers agreed that the proposed deep sea-port would offer an opening to sea to the Yunnan region of China.

They exchanged views on issues relating to adaptation and mitigation of climate change

impacts and recognised the need for a comprehensive agreement in upcoming climate conference in Cancun, Mexico.

Later, Hasan met GAO Yuan, deputy director general and senior representative of the Department of Aid to Foreign Countries of the Ministry of Commerce of China.

They discussed the possibilities of narrowing the trade gap between the two countries by increasing imports from Bangladesh and utilisation of potentials of investment in Bangladesh especially in the newly established Export Promotion Zone (EPZ) in Chittagong.

Hasan also had a useful meeting with Vice Minister for the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China, Wu Xiaoping, also former vice governor of Kunming.

The Chinese minister proposed to support Bangladesh in capacity building of the concerned officials through organising training programmes in China.

Hasan, who is now in an official visit to China, is leading a six-member delegation that includes Vice-chancellor of Brac University Dr Ainun Nishat and Awami League Organising Secretary Ahmed Hossain.

In-laws throw acid on housewife

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A housewife's chest has been burnt as her in-laws threw acid on her at Laxmipasha in Bakerganj upazila on Thursday night.

They also confined Reba Begum, the victim, to a room of the house by locking it from outside for the entire night until she escaped through a window yesterday morning, said victim's father.

Reba, 25, is the wife of Shahidul Islam, a Kuwait expatriate.

She was initially admitted to Bakerganj health complex and later shifted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon as her condition worsened.

Locals said Reba had an altercation with her father-in-law, mother-in-law and brother-in-law on Thursday night. At one stage, they poured acid on her.

BANGABANDHU'S CONTRIBUTIONS 'Rewrite them clearly in constitution'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Abu Sayeed yesterday demanded reprinting Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's name as the father of the nation and proclaimer of the independence "specifically and clearly" in the constitution.

Sayeed, who was the member of the drafting committee of Bangladesh Constitution, 1972, was speaking to reporters at his Dhanmondi residence in the city.

"Considering the constitutional obligation and the high court verdict on proclamation of independence, I demand his (Bangabandhu's) name be reprinted as the father of the nation and the proclaimer of the independence in a

separate article of the constitution," said Sayeed.

Former state minister for information, he said Bangabandhu was recognised as the father of the nation and proclaimer of independence of the War of Liberation in the country's first constitution, drafted and accepted in 1972.

"It would be equal to sedition if Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is denied as the father of the nation and proclaimer of the independence as he is recognised in the constitution," he added.

Sayeed said the anti-liberation forces are engaged in dividing the nation, confusing the new generation and distorting the history of the War of Liberation.

BDR mutiny trial in Satkhira today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A special court of BDR in Satkhira will begin trial of 104 accused in connection with the case of Satkhira BDR mutiny today.

Lt Col Yahia Azam, sector commander of Rajshahi BDR, will lead the three-member court at 41 Rifles Battalion headquarters. The other members are Lt Col Khalid Hossain and Major Touhidul Islam.

The court will bring the BDR mutineers of 41 Rifles Battalion under trial, said Lt

Col Enayet Karim, commanding officer (CO) of 41 Rifles Battalion.

Among the accused, 27 jawans are now in jail.

Subedar Major Sarwar Jahan of 7 Rifles Battalion filed the case against 27 BDR jawans in connection with the February 25-26 mutiny in Satkhira.

Deputy Attorney General Advocate Shashanka Shekhar Sarkar will aid the court as a representative of attorney general and advocate Md Selim will assist the court as public prosecutor during the trial.

Language Movement hero Jalil dies

UNB, Dhaka

Language Movement veteran MA Jalil Sarker passed away on Thursday in Seoul, South Korea. He was 87.

Family sources said Jalil breathed his last around 5:30pm at a hospital in Seoul. He went with his wife to visit their only son Dr MA Zahed who is now living in the South Korean capital.

Jalil was a front-line language movement hero. He was among the first group of 10 students who came out from the Arts Building of Dhaka University in a procession defying section 144 in 1952.

Jalil, a first year student of Political Science department of the DU at that time, was arrested from the procession.

He joined a reception organised by the president for the language movement heroes on February 25, 1951.

Two killed, 25 injured in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two persons were killed and 25 others injured in a road accident on Sylhet-Tamabil highway at Mohammadpur of the district on Thursday night.

The deceased were identified as Lulu Begum, 50, and her grandson Abdur Razaque, 5, of Nayabasti area in Gowainghat upazila of the district.

The accident took place at about 7:00pm when a Jafflong-bound passenger bus collided head-on with a stone-laden truck.

Ten of the injured were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital while others to Jaintapur Health Complex. After the accident, agitating locals put barricade on the road for an hour.

WEATHER TODAY

Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Chittagong division, at a few places over Sylhet, Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are likely at places over Chittagong division.

Day temperature may fall by 1-3 degree Celsius over southern part and may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country, said Met Office.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:26pm and rises tomorrow at 6:00am.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday Sandwip and lowest 22.3 degrees at Madaripur.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town   | Temperature in Celsius |      | Humidity in percentage |         |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
|             | Max                    | Min  | Morning                | Evening |
| Dhaka       | 32.3                   | 26.2 | 74                     | 79      |
| Chittagong  | 32.4                   | 26.0 | 75                     | 83      |
| Rajshahi    | 30.5                   | 24.2 | 87                     | 89      |
| Khulna      | 32.5                   | 25.9 | 93                     | 97      |
| Barisal     | 33.2                   | 26.1 | 84                     | 92      |
| Sylhet      | 30.8                   | 23.3 | 91                     | 78      |
| Cox's Bazar | 32.0                   | 26.2 | 75                     | 78      |

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**DHAKA TODAY**

**Launching ceremony**  
 Brac bank will hold a launching ceremony programme. Venue: Lake Shore Hotel, Time: 11:00am.

**Workshop**  
 Local Government Engineering Department will arrange a workshop. Venue: RDEC building, LGED, Time: 9:30am.

**Rabindra sangheet**  
 Indian High Commission in Dhaka will arrange a Rabindra Sangeet programme. Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Time: 7:00pm.

**Workshop**  
 Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity will organise a workshop. Venue: Brac In Centre, Mohakhali, Time: 5:00pm.

**Meeting**  
 Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will hold a meeting. Venue: Dhaka Club, Time: 1:30pm.

**Human chain**  
 Bangladesh National Awami Party will hold a human chain. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 12:00pm.

**Discussion**  
 Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will arrange a discussion. Venue: Cirdap auditorium, Time: 4:00pm.

**Human chain**  
 Paribesh Bachao Andolan will form a human chain. Venue: Nikunja Residential Area, Time: 11:00am.

**Workshop**  
 Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University will organise a daylong debate workshop. Venue: University auditorium, Time: 9:30am.