

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



The Many Faces of Mr. Anwar, Jhal-Muri Vendor

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

The Colour of Jhal-Muri

I love the Laxmi Bazar neighbourhood because children from local schools fill the street, and they happily pose for a photo. During one of my visits, I was walking with my camera when I noticed a man on the footpath close to St. Gregory's. His unusual attire caught my attention. I quickly took a picture and moved on.

Back home, I looked at the photo and shook my head. Why would anyone dress like that?

I found the answer on my next visit there. The man was at the same spot wearing a different outfit. This time I stopped and looked around.

He was selling Jhal-Muri, a popular street snack made from puffed rice, green chilli, onions and spices. His stall was next to a lamp post. A giant container of puffed rice and several other ingredients were balanced on a tiny table under a large colourful umbrella. He introduced himself as Mr. Anwar Hossain.

I decided not to beat around the bush. "Er, why do you wear these outfits?"

He thought for a bit. "To make people happy... Children love them. I have one for every day of the week."

How did he start in Jhal-Muri? "I was working at Hotel Al-Razzaque when a friend came up with the idea. That was sixteen years ago. I have never looked back."

How many people buy from him? "I go through fifteen kg of Muri and two kg of green chilli, feeding about 1000 customers daily." Children are 30-40% of his customers.

I asked Mr. Anwar about his workday.

He cooks ingredients (daal and spice pastes) for his Jhal-Muri before dawn. Then - from nine to six - he sells at this spot. Afterwards he moves to Sadarghat catering to night shoppers. He is married with one son and takes Fridays off.

I sat down to watch him in action. Numerous customers stopped by. When a mother brought her ten-year-old schoolgirl, Mr. Anwar asked the girl to recommend the Jhal-Muri to me. But the endorser turned problematic. "It is bad! Very bad!" she told me, tongue-in-cheek. Then Mr. Anwar handed over her Jhal-Muri. Her smile of anticipation was enough endorserment.

What were some memorable days for Mr. Anwar?

"Sometimes I dispense Jhal-Muri at parties - picnics in Gazipur, weddings in Lal Kuthi that I enjoy very much. I have also appeared on TV singing my song..."

"Huh? You write songs too?" I interrupted.

"It goes like this: I just cannot win my friend's heart This life of selling Muri is so hard."

Before leaving, I tried his Jhal-Muri in both wet and dry versions. The dry Jhal-Muri was crunchy with fresh lemon juice, onions and coriander leaves. The wet one had daal and spice pastes coating the rice with a smoky cinnamon flavour. While both were delicious, I preferred mine dry.

Colourful Mr. Anwar, along with his delightful customers, can be found next to the Prince Bakery in Laxmi Bazar.

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Trucks to be made in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will soon turn into an automobile manufacturing country that will pave way for exporting 'Made in Bangladesh' trucks to the global market for the first time.

Nitol-Niloy Group of Bangladesh joined hands with Tata Motors, India's largest automobile company, to set up the country's first automobile manufacturing plant.

Nitol-Niloy Group Chairman Abdul Matlub Ahmed told the news agency that a deal would be signed by the end of this month or January next year.

The two private sector business conglomerates of Bangladesh and India think the project would bring manifold benefits for the country through employment generation and boosting export earnings.

Mini and light trucks will be manufactured in the joint-venture plant to be set up on 250 bighas of land at Pakundia in Kishoreganj at a cost of nearly Tk 1.00 crore.

The project will likely reduce the price of trucks in the domestic market, provide employment opportunity and make country's export-list bigger.

State-run Pragati starts assembling Pajero jeeps

Each to be sold at Tk 60 lakh, import price now Tk 1.2 crore

BSS, Chittagong

Pragati Industries Limited (PIL), the lone state-run automobile assembling industry of the country, has started assembling Mitsubishi's most modern Pajero jeep in Bangladesh.

PIL has already completed assembling of two jeeps in its own plant in Chittagong on experimental basis and is likely to go for commercial production soon.

As part of a five-year agreement, signed between Managing Director of PIL Engineer Jahir Uddin Chowdhury and Corporate General Manager of Mitsubishi's Asia and ASEAN offices Zenichiro Nichina, PIL started assembling the Mitsubishi Jeep in Bangladesh.

The Mitsubishi authorities has also expressed their keenness to assist in setting up of a plant in Bangladesh for manufacturing spare parts of Mitsubishi jeep.

Jahir Uddin Chowdhury told the news agency that a four-member engineers team of Mitsubishi Corporation (MC) had imparted training to Bangladesh motor workers on assembling sports jeeps from October 18 to November 5 this year.

Chowdhury also said they had successfully assembled two Pajero jeeps and would assemble 10 more in between January and March next year.

"We will start large scale commercial production after successfully selling these 10 jeeps in the Bangladesh market, Jahir said adding that after assembling a jeep here, it would be available at only Tk 60 lakh though its present market price is Tk 1.2 crore.

Asked about its quality, he said the MC authority is determined to maintain their standard and practically assessed the quality of PIL three times through sample tests before work orders.

"No internationally reputed company wants to undermine the quality of its products wherever it is assembled," the MD asserted.

Mitsubishi engineers after visiting the PIL in July, 2009, expressed satisfaction

over its overall condition and working atmosphere.

A four-member Bangladeshi delegation from PIL including its MD visited Mitsubishi Pajero Manufacturing industry in Thailand on September 9 last year and interacted in details on different technical and infrastructure aspects at PIL.

Reciprocally, another four-member Mitsubishi delegates led by its Asia Region manager Kajuhidi Ogata also visited the Pragati Industry.

The then Gandhara Industries, now PIL, came into being with logistics supports of General Motors of England on January 20 in 1966 near Barabkunda, Chittagong on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

After the independence, Bangladesh government acquired the industry and renamed it Pragati Industries Limited (PIL), which was then enlisted with Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC).

PIL, which earned a profit of Tk 16.5 crore last fiscal year, has an annual capacity of assembling 1,500 vehicles like bus, truck, jeep and private car.

Check corruption in public sector banks

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a workshop here urged the government to take steps for reducing corruption in state-owned commercial banks (SCBs) and easing the loaning system to develop the industrial sector.

International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) organised the advocacy workshop on 'Industrial credit and corruption in SCBs' at Hotel Agrabad in Chittagong city on Thursday evening.

Bangladesh Krishi Bank Chairman Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled presented a keynote paper titled 'Reducing corruption in accessing industrial credit' at the workshop chaired by IBFB President Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury.

Khaled in the paper identified that the government's undue pressure, political influence over loan sanction, lack of skills and honesty of the SCB officials, and inadequate measures to punish corrupt trade union leaders are the main reasons behind the corruption in accessing credit from SCBs.

He recommended a two-stage process for nominating and selecting the directors, recruiting efficient officials, and restructuring the salary structure in this regard.

According to him, the central bank can list three persons for each post, out of which the government will nominate one director.

Khaled also suggested appointing general manager (GM), managing director (MD), deputy MD (DMD) and additional MD (AMD) by recruitment from the open market.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua in his speech at the programme said the SCBs alone should not be blamed for corruption since corruption is a "result" and "by-product" of comprehensive socio-economic situation.

He blamed a section of politicians for exploiting politics and institutionalising corruption in every sector in the country.

He pointed out and admitted the shortcomings of the SCBs including their ineffective management.

The minister said the SCBs' management board members have limited power to take decision while the managing directors have to carry out the order from higher authority in disbursing loans.

Barua emphasised restructuring the loan schedules and bringing down the interest rates to a single-digit figure to promote more investment in the industrial sector.



Brac University Vice Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury inaugurates a website of Everest Hero Musa Ibrahim at Alliance Française de Dhaka yesterday.

Zonta's three projects for women development

METRO DESK

Zonta International Clubs of District 25 area 2 at a meeting decided to take three projects at district level to improve women's status.

The daylong meeting, titled "Empowering Women," was held at a hotel of Gulshan in the city recently, where all five clubs decided to contribute jointly in the projects, says a press release.

Brigadier General Dr Suraiya Rahman underscored the need for role of nursing in Bangladesh.

The meeting decided to establish a Para-nursing institute in Bangladesh to raise the image of nursing as a noble profession.

It also decided on a second project -- Rugganj Primary School for women and girl weavers and on the third -- homestead agro-farming for women.

The meeting was presided over by the club's Area Director Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud and addressed by Dilruba Ahmed, Zonta International member for organisation, Membership Classification Committee; Nahid Moyeen, governor of District 25; and Zeenath Rahim, foundation ambassador.

The 91st foundation anniversary of Zonta International was also observed at the function.

Musa Ibrahim on web

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The world from now on can learn about the story of Musa Ibrahim's Everest triumph and his activities from his personal website.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury inaugurated the website, www.musaibrahim.com.bd, at the Alliance Française de Dhaka yesterday.

The official website will provide detailed information on Musa's expedition to the Everest. Moreover, his biography, recent and past activities and future plans are also there.

A collection of photos and videos and necessary information regarding mountaineering is available in this website. There is also an opportunity to question Musa directly and collect his autograph from this interactive site.

Former captain of Bangladesh Cricket Team Habibur Bashar Sumon, President of Bangladesh Computer Society Mostafa Jabbar and Alliance Française de Dhaka Director Saliha Lofev were also present.

Mohiuddin calls for AL unity

A CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Former mayor of Chittagong City Corporation and President of Chittagong city unit Awami League (AL) ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury called all the party leaders to be united.

He was speaking at a meeting organised by Chittagong city unit AL at Laldighi Grounds yesterday.

Presiding over the meeting, Mohiuddin urged the opposition BNP to avoid destructive activities for the greater interest of the country.

He urged the AL leaders, absent from the meeting, not to divide the party and said, "United we stand and divided we fall."

Mentionable, some leaders including Chittagong city unit AL Vice President Dr Afsarul Amin, its Vice President Nurul Islam BSc, and its Finance Secretary Abdus Salam were absent from the meeting.

Chittagong city unit AL Secretary Quazi Enamul Haque Danu, its member AZM Nasir Uddin and lawmaker MA Latif also spoke. Later, a huge procession was brought in protest of hartal.

Stop sand extraction from Meghna

Demand speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday demanded a bar on sand extraction from the Meghna River near Sonargaon to protect Mayadwip, a natural island on the river.

Dishonest and profit-mongering businessmen are extracting sand from the river near Mayadwip, threatening the islands existence. So the government should take necessary measures to stop sand lifting there and protect the island, they said.

They placed the demand while addressing a press conference jointly organised by Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) and Subornagram

Foundation at Sonargaon Museum in Narayanganj yesterday, says a press release.

Speakers also demanded setting up of effluent treatment plants (ETPs) at all the industries in Sonargaon to prevent river pollution caused by the wastes they discharge.

Poba Chairman Abu Naser Khan, Subornagram Foundation Chief Executive Shahed Kayes, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy General Secretary Mahmudul Selim, among others, were present at the press conference.

Earlier they held a rally in front of the Sonargaon Museum to press the same demands.

Butterfly fair held at JU

DU CORRESPONDENT

A panoramic butterfly fair was held at Jahangirnagar University yesterday.

On the occasion, Prof Md Shafique Haider Chowdhury was awarded life time honour for his research work on butterfly resources.

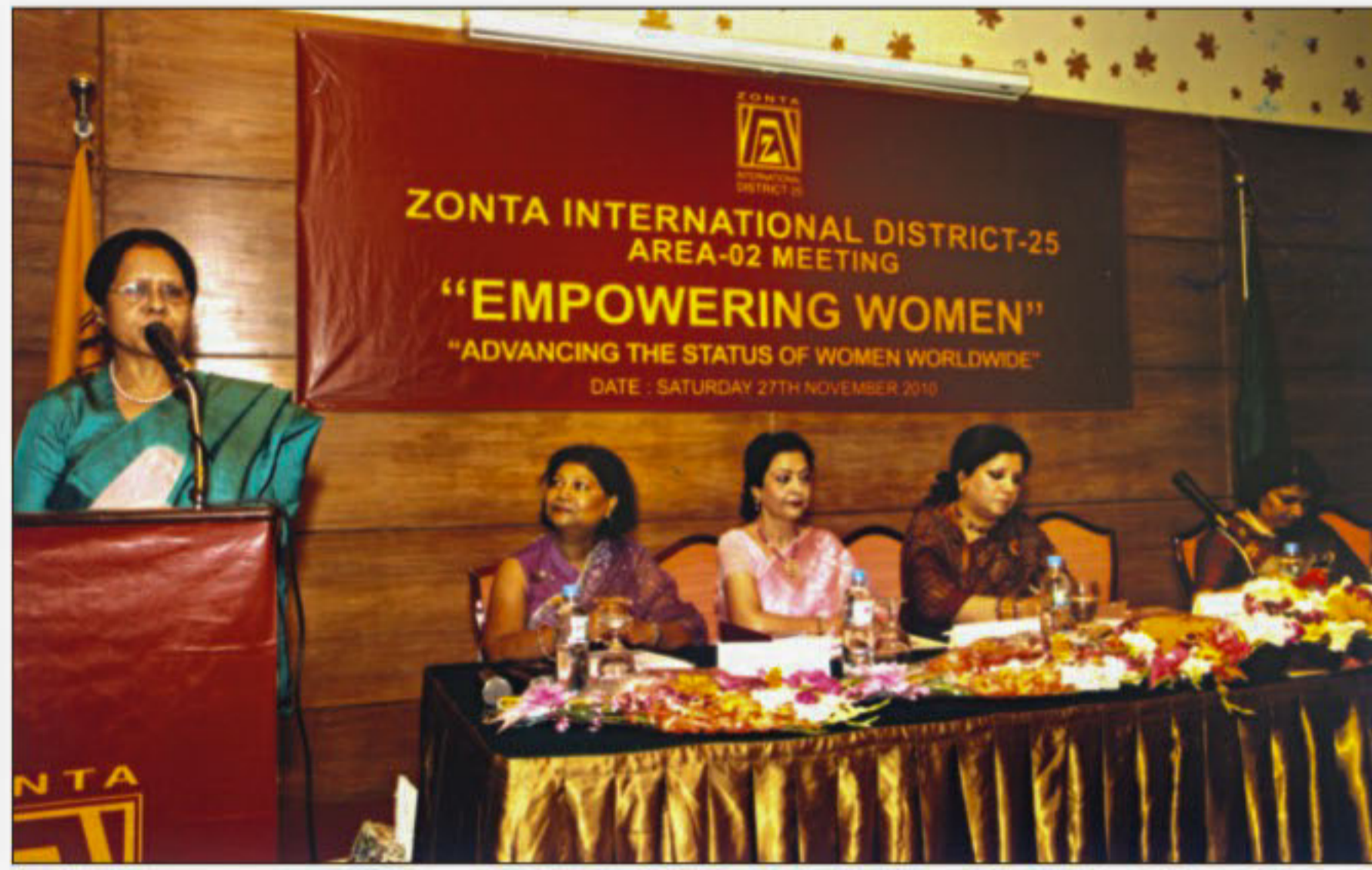
JU Vice Chancellor Prof Shareef Enamul Kabir urged the researchers to be more attentive for increasing the

bio-diversity on the campus, said a press release.

More research should be done for saving different species of butterflies, he added.

The VC announced the JU campus to be unparallel for the natural beauty and bio-diversity.

Pro VC Dr Farhad Hossain, Dr Abdul Zobber Hawlader and Dr Monwar Hossain also spoke in the inaugural ceremony of the fair.



Zonta International District 25 area 02 Bangladesh holds a meeting at Lakeshore Hotel of Gulshan in the city recently.

DHAKA TODAY

Convention
A convention will be held on the occasion of 19th International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Venue: Biam auditorium, Time: 11:30am.

Film festival
National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled will arrange a film festival. Venue: TSC auditorium, Dhaka University, Time: 5:30pm.

Roundtable
Fortnightly Anannya will arrange a roundtable. Venue: YWCA auditorium, 3/23, Mohammadpur, Time: 3:30pm.

Workshop
Eastern Bank Limited will arrange a workshop. Venue: Westin hotel, Time: 9:30am.

Music
Dhaka Club Limited will arrange an instrumental music evening. Venue: Dhaka Club, Time: 8:30pm.

Crafts fair
Bangladesh National Museum will arrange a crafts fair on the occasion of its anniversary. Venue: National Museum, Time: 11:00am.

Lecture
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will arrange a lecture programme. Venue: Asiatic society auditorium, Nimali, Time: 4:00pm.

Human chain
Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement will form a human chain. Venue: In front of National Museum, Shahbagh, Time: 10:30am.

Law and order deterioration responsible for women's repression: Justice Habibur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman yesterday said the deteriorating law and order situation is the sole cause behind the increasing acid violence and repression against women across the country.

He also held the law and order situation responsible for the indecent attitudes being shown against women.

He was delivering a memorial lecture titled 'Woman-independence' at the fifth Selina Bahar Jaman Memorial Lecture at the Sufia Kamal auditorium in the National Museum in the city.

Prof Anisuzzaman said Selina Bahar was relentless in preserving and recognising the works of the persons who had contributed to the society.

Selina Bahar will live through her work, he said. Writer Kazi Madina said Selina Bahar worked as a unique ambassador of Bangalee culture alongside teaching and pursuing literary career.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country with temporary partly cloudy sky in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:11pm and rises tomorrow at 6:27am.

Country's highest temperature 31.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundu and lowest 11.1 degrees at Srimongal.

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	29.3	15.1	53	65
Chittagong	28.2	17.5	78	74
Rajshahi	27.8	14.0	82	81
Khulna	28.0	14.5	79	75
Sylhet	29.0	15.7	54	64
Cox's Bazar	30.5	15.1	53	82