

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Munajat on the Bridge.

PHOTO:
IHTISHAM KABIR

A Memorable Day

THIS year, the Bishwa Istema -the huge annual religious gathering of Muslims - was held at its usual Tongi location split over two weekends. I wanted to photograph Akheri Munajat, its final prayer. Since Tongi road was closed to motor vehicles, my options were to walk, ride a rickshaw-van, or bicycle. I cycled.

Starting early, I weaved my way through a jam of confused vehicles at the road closure. A few cars, airport-bound, were allowed through the crowd. Past the airport, the road was occupied by a steady stream of pedestrians, punctuated by bicyclists or rickshaw-vans. People were upbeat, stores closed, and even the street sweepers were taking a break from kicking up dust.

Near the Turag bridge, I found a friendly CNG station to park my cycle. I spent several hours wandering and taking pictures. As the prayer drew closer, a human tide engulfed the road. After filling up sidewalks and storefronts they scaled fences to occupy the narrow strips on traffic islands. Many headed for rooftops. The river itself filled with boats holding people awaiting the prayer.

A few diehard vendors selling snacks and hats avoided the sharp eyes of the police. One shrewd entrepreneur sold sheets of old newspaper for people to sit on.

I was adjusting a camera control when the prayer started. A hush fell suddenly, and I looked up from the camera. Thousands around me who had been moving, talking, eating or laughing had become completely still, hands raised towards the heavens in supplication. A hat vendor placed his

hat-stand against a wall to pray. Three policemen joined in. A burkha-clad woman prayed by herself in the middle of the road.

The prayer ended in fifteen minutes. The crowd energized instantly, everyone scrambling into the road towards Dhaka. I pushed and shoved my way into the CNG station, retrieved my bicycle, and approached the road.

But the road, jam-packed with people, had no room for a bicycle. I saw several disappointed cyclists waiting on the sidewalk, shaking their head. Then I looked carefully into the crowd and noticed that sporadic ambulances, VIP cars, and RAB motorcycles were slowly making a thin lane on the right. This gave me an idea.

I eased my bicycle into the crowd and walked to that lane. Positioning myself behind a car and saying a quick prayer, I mounted my bicycle. Though I was pedalling, moving with the crowd gave me the strange sensation of a strong current pushing me. A double-riding bicyclist appeared. I appreciated the company, but when he lost his balance and fell towards me, I had to swing wildly, barely missing the sharp fence of the traffic island.

At Uttara 7, I ran into a jubilant group chanting Allahu Akbar. The crowd thinned past the airport. I cycled freely while listening to a series of salesmen selling miraculous cure-alls by megaphones. The rest of my ride was uneventful. I reached home feeling fortunate to have lived this memorable day.

.....
ihtishamkabar@yahoo.com

DUJA'S SILVER JUBILEE

Do journalism for people's welfare

Urges Justice Habibur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman yesterday urged the young journalists to practice journalism for ensuring welfare of all, which would be reflected in their work.

The former chief adviser to a caretaker government also said press freedom in the country has increased recently.

But newspapers of the country are still ranked in lower position than that in the Maldives, he said, calling upon all to advance Bangladeshi media further.

Justice Rahman was speaking as the chief guest at a discussion at TSC organised by Dhaka University Journalist Association (DUJA) marking its 25th anniversary.

Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman said many a media in the country is destroying objectivity, impartiality, and independence being noticed now. "A number of newspapers is being used for personal interest and for the interest of business or some quarter."

He urged DUJA's beginning journalists to prepare for taking the country's journalism to a height of standard. "Newspapers have been playing historic role in all movements and all aspects since the past. The chance still remains and will be remaining in the days to follow."

"Honest, free, and impartial journalism is necessary for that," he said, urging the cubs to neither be influenced nor be benefited by anyone and not to be involved in corruption.

Matiur also said the editors and publishers need the training first, as a newspaper does not do well or attain acceptability if the editor and publisher are not trained well.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said the core of journalism is objectivity and independence and every journalist should work with objective attitude.

"We can overcome all problems if we carry out our duties properly and with responsibility."

Khairul Anwar, founding member of DUJA, presided over the discussion while DUJA president Rakib Ahammed presented a survey report on "What media we want".

Prof Arefin Siddique opened the silver jubilee programme of DUJA prior to the discussion followed by a procession.

SEPARATE SSC QUESTION PAPERS

UNOs blame duty officers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officers on duty were responsible for the distribution of separate sets of question papers at two centres in Dhaka Education Board on the third day of SSC and equivalent examinations, claimed the UNOs concerned.

On February 6, examinees of two centres -- Keraniganj and Barhatta in Netrakona -- received separate sets of English first paper question although all the centres under an education board are supposed to get uniform question paper.

Dhaka Education Board issued show cause notices to two Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) in this regard and announced that answer sheets will be examined based on the question papers.

The UNOs concerned on Thursday came up with their reply where they blamed the officers on duty, who were assigned with additional duties, said Dhaka board officials in return of anonymity. The UNOs said the duty officers made the mistake as the names of the question sets looked similar, they reasoned.

BR

AIN

BR

ATS

The Daily Star | CHAMPS21

KNOWLEDGE CORNER

CHAMPS21

CHES

Chess is a two player turn based board game which originated in India in the sixth century. In its early days it was known as "Chaturanga" and evolved to its modern form in Southern Europe in the fifteenth century. Chess is widely acknowledged and appreciated as a game of intense tactics and genius.

The chess board is an 8x8 grid of alternating black and white cells. Two players start playing with the same set of 16 pieces, which includes eight pawns, two rooks, two knights, two bishops, one queen and one king. The game starts with a move from the player who has the white set of pieces, followed by the player with the black set. With alternating movements and taking over the other player's pieces, each player tries to checkmate the opponent's king. Checkmate refers to the condition when the king is under immediate attack (check) and there is no way to remove it to safety in the next move.

Today chess is a popular sport worldwide. Apart from individual games many competitions are arranged at the regional, national and international levels. Most international events are organized under the supervision of FIDE or World Chess Federation. FIDE also connects various national chess federations.

Though chess is a recognized sport of the International Olympic Committee, it was never played in the Olympics. Instead, chess has its own Olympiad which is held every two years as a team event. Each international player is rated and titled by FIDE. The highest title of chess is grandmaster followed by other titles such as International Master, FIDE Master, etc. To be a grandmaster one must achieve a rating of 2500 and won three grandmaster norms. Niaz Murshed was the first player to be a grandmaster (1987) from Bangladesh as well as from South Asia. The current world champion of chess is also from South Asia, Viswanathan Anand, from India. The highest rated female chess player is Judit Polgar, a

Hungarian.

Computers can also be programmed to play chess. Nowadays, they are becoming more adept due to technological advancements. Deep Blue in 1997 proved it by defeating a reigning world champion, Garry Kasparov. It would be interesting to see who reigns in the world of Chess in the coming future, Man or Machine.

CITIES OF THE WORLD

Once upon a time there was a city in Germany named Hamelin which was full of rats. One day, a pried piper came and made all the rats disappear by playing a magical tune on his flute.....We have all gone through the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin from our very childhood and thus first got acquainted with different cities of the world. Later as we grew up, the Eiffel Tower and Louvre Museum introduced Paris while the Big Ben and the Statue of Liberty represent London & New York to us.

Nowadays, cities with a population of more than 10 million are referred to as mega cities. New York, Mumbai, Tokyo and Mexico City are some of them. Shanghai is the world's most populous city. Capital cities are the centre of administrative and commercial activities in a country. Many cities are better known to us with nicknames rather than real names like ROME as the City of Seven Hills and JAIPUR as the Pink City. Cities have been the focus of many ancient civilizations, as Athens was to Greek civilization.

River banks are also an important factor in the rise of some affluent cities like Kolkata beside the Hoogly River and Paris besides the Seine. Many cities are popular for some special products. Paris is especially a favourite to perfume lovers and Swiss cities are special for watches.

Apart from these, some amazing facts make cities even more special to us. La Paz (the capital city of Bolivia) is the highest capital city in the world. Istanbul (formerly Constantinople) in Turkey is the only city lying between two continents, Asia and Europe!!

Log on to www.champs21.com now to participate in Brain Brats contest and get questions related to this article!!!

Initiative of The Daily Star & teamcreative

Challenged boy at DMCH crying for hope

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A physically challenged and unidentified eight-year old boy is fighting for life at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The boy was seriously injured in a road accident and was admitted in bed number 1 of ward no 33 of DMCH on November 12 last year.

The helpless boy can only cry and has to be monitored round-the-clock, which makes the job of taking care of him difficult.

Dr Salma Sultana, consultant at the casualty block (wards 32 and 33), said the boy is physically, mentally and intellectually challenged. She said they were trying to improve the condition of the boy and rehabilitate him.

Ward sources said two ayahs (attendants) of ward 33 (children and women's ward) are taking care of the boy.

The unidentified boy on a DMCH bed.

PHOTO: STAR

He was at first able to normally consume liquid food (milk and horlicks), which is not included in the regular DMCH diet list, but now has to take it

through a pipe inserted through the nostrils.

One of the ayahs said some doctors and DMCH Social Welfare Department used to provide financial assistance and medicine but now sources are dwindling.

A DMCH social welfare officer requesting anonymity said they received a request from the doctors around 15 days back and they contacted two rehabilitation centres.

Dr Salma said after visiting the boy, representatives of the two rehabilitation centres expressed their unwillingness to take the boy.

The ayah told The Daily Star that a tea vendor Mohammad Soheli rescued the boy from Madani Nagar on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway under Siddhirganj of Narayanganj district and brought him to DMCH.

Soheli tried to find the boy's relatives by announcing through microphone and searched the area for two days but to no avail, added the ayah.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of Biswanath Acharya Chowdhuri,

a noted person for rehabilitating challenged people in Bangladesh, says a press release.

He became paralysed in 1963 at the age of 20 for exposure to chemical poison while he was conducting research work. In 1973, he joined with Valerie Taylor in CRP.

He was a trustee and founder member of CRP. He engaged himself with the organisation for 31 years, till his death.

Dr Sikandar Hayat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the second death anniversary of former ambassador and

eminent educationist Dr Sikandar Hayat Khan Yousufjai, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the local mosque, madrasa and educational institutions at Pachcharan village of Tangail.

NEWS IN

brief

Samanta Lal chief coordinator of all burn units

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Samanta Lal Sen Thursday has been appointed chief coordinator of the Burn Units across the country.

Earlier he left the administrative responsibility of Dhaka Medical College Hospital's Burn Unit and handed over the charge to DMCH director general.

Dr Sen told The Daily Star that he has got a contractual appointment for two years. Dr Sen said he will take steps to open burn units at district level hospitals.

BCL foils cultural contest at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), a student wing of ruling party, of Ziaur Rahman Hall unit at Rajshahi University (RU) foiled annual cultural competition of the hall on Thursday evening.

Students of the hall said BCL activists locked the hall gallery one hour before of the programme.

They said the authorities of the hall completed all the preparation of the annual cultural competition.

Many invited guests including the university proctor and senior teachers of the university came to the hall to attend the programme.

Ctg Samity's centenary held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chattragram Samity, a Dhaka based regional organisation of Chittagong, celebrated its centenary yesterday amid festivity. BNP vice president Abdullah Al Noman, former deputy prime minister Jamal Uddin Ahmed, former adviser of caretaker government Ruhul Alam Chowdhury and president of the Chattragram Samity Md Jahangir Alam Khan were present.