

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Mr. Hossain With Merchandise

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

# The Vendor of Amulets

It was in Rampura that the man with brilliant henna-dyed hair and beard caught my eye. He had walked down the road holding a seven-foot pole when an old woman stopped him and started talking. The pole was covered with merchandise trinkets and costume jewellery, it appeared. I stopped for a closer look.

"Have you been selling these all your life?" I asked.

"Only five years," he replied tersely.

His name was Md. Anwar Hossain. He was seventy-six. In another life, he said, he had been a soldier, first serving in East Pakistan Rifles, then Bangladesh Rifles. He started in infantry and rose to Subedar rank. "There are 850 miles of border in this country. I have seen it all, north to south, east to west," he barked, military style.

But tragedy struck soon after he retired: his entire life saving was robbed from his village home in Jamalpur.

He was going to start a small business with the capital, but now found himself in dire straits. "I came to Dhaka and went without food for seven days until a kind Bede showed me this business. That's how I got started," he said, his voice surprisingly free of regret or self-pity. [Bede are nomads who live on boats and wander around the country.]

I looked over his offerings on the pole and realised my mistake. Those were amulets and talismans he was selling, not trinkets.

There were several types of tabij, large and small, empty and filled. The latter contained tiny scrolls filled with

prayers. He had small shells worn around the chest for ulcerous pain; rings and metallic bangles for joint pain; and black rubber rings for the ankles of those having trouble walking.

He also carried the latest fashion among amulets, a silver tabij shaped like a bullet.

His 60-70 items cost between five and twenty Taka each. On a good day his sales approached 1000 Taka, he said. How about today? He extracted a few notes from his shirt pocket. "That's it?" I asked, disappointed. Signalling me to wait, he emptied several other pockets. "I sold close to five hundred Taka today from 9:30 to eleven," he declared.

"Do you always sell in Rampura," I asked. "No, I sell everywhere from Shonir Akhra to Mohammedpur to Badda," he said. "Shonir Akhra is quite far. Do you take the bus?" I asked. "I walk everywhere, a different place each day," he said.

Mr. Anwar told me he had two grandchildren by his son, back in Jamalpur. "When will you see them?" I asked. He gave me a "you-have-to-be-kidding" look. "At Eid, of course! I will take a week off."

A swarm of women appeared unexpectedly looking for medicinal talismans. I watched Mr. Anwar fit a rheumatism ring into a woman's finger. As she negotiated the price down to ten Taka, I decided to take my leave. It was turning to be a good day for the vendor of amulets.

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# 17 killed, 62 hurt during Eid

METRO DESK

Seventeen people were killed, 62 injured and over 50 houses were ransacked throughout the country during the Eid vacation since Tuesday.

Six people were found dead in the city and its outskirts.

Kamrangirchar police recovered the body of Jarina Begum, 30, wife of Kuwait expatriate Mohammad Ali, with stab injuries from her residence in Hasan Nagar on August 29. Her two children were also rescued from there.

Jarina's brother Moktar Hossain said the killer also looted around 20 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 3 lakh in cash from the house.

Quoting his niece Meem, 9, Moktar said owner of a tea shop adjacent to Jarina's house took some money from Jarina some months ago promising to buy a piece of land for her.

He came to Jarina's house on August 28 at night and gave biscuits to the children, who immediately lost their senses. The children remember hearing the sound of a quarrel coming from Jarina's room, said Moktar.

A case was filed with Kamrangirchar Police Station in this connection.

Meanwhile, the slaughtered bodies of two elderly women were recovered from their residence at Maniknagar of Keraniganj early Tuesday.

Officer-in-charge of Keraniganj Police Station said the deceased are Julekha Begum, 65, and her aunt Rezia Begum, 75. Police arrested Rezia's son Asad, 30, in this connection.

Ashulia police recovered the floating body of a woman aged around 28 from river Turag on Thursday evening.

Savar police recovered the roped body of a youth named Sarwar Hossain, 26, from Duttapara of Birulia area on Thursday night.

Paltan police recovered a body from

the 14th floor of Azad Centre of city's Purana Paltan area on Wednesday.

The deceased Mazharul Haque Swapan, a businessman and resident of Khilgaon area, was killed by unknown miscreants, said Swapan's brother Mostaqul Haque Sumon.

In Rangpur town, alleged rivals stabbed dead Masud Rana, 28, the joint secretary of district unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), near Power Development Board (PDB) office in Lalbagh Khamar area on Tuesday afternoon.

In Gangachara upazila of Rangpur, unknown criminals slaughtered two sources of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Thursday.

Altaf Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kotwali Police Station, identified the deceased as Abdus Salam and Mominul Islam.

Our correspondent from Brahmanbaria reports: At least two people were killed and 17 others injured in two separate clashes in Nasirnagar and sadar upazilas of the district on Thursday evening.

The deceased were identified as Nazrul Islam, 22, son of Ishaque Mia of Nasirnagar upazila, and Dulal Mia, 25, son of Ibrahim Mia of sadar upazila.

In another clash, Dulal was killed and Ibrahim injured when family members of neighbouring Minnat Ali attacked Ibrahim's family with sharp weapons centring a trivial matter at Pippara village of sadar upazila.

Our correspondent from Mymensingh reports: Unidentified criminals stabbed a man to death and injured five others at Chakua village under Gafargaon upazila of the district early Wednesday.

The deceased Hasan Ali, 47, son of late Omar Ali of the village, was stabbed in his sleep by a gang of criminals led by his neighbour Sohel, a truck driver, around 2:00am, said police.

When Hasan's family came forward to his assistance, the criminals

swooped on them, injuring five. Hasan died on way to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

In Pabna, a man was beaten dead allegedly by neighbours over previous enmity in Faridpur upazila on Tuesday night.

Quoting family members, police said Ebad Ali, 60, a farmer of Nesrapra village, had dispute with his neighbour Chand Ali over owning a piece of land.

As a sequel to the dispute, Chand, with some others, beat up Ebad mercilessly with iron rods and bamboo sticks inside his house, leaving him critically injured, said Zahidul Hafiz, OC of Faridpur Police Station.

Ebad died on way to Pabna Medical College Hospital.

His son Shamsul Islam filed a case with Faridpur Police Station on Wednesday accusing six persons.

UNB adds: A young man was killed allegedly by his friend at Jamtala slum in Tigerpass area of Chittagong on Tuesday.

Naznin Begum, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station, said the victim, Saiful, 22, a resident of the slum, was taking tea with some friends at a local tea stall in the morning.

They suddenly were locked in an altercation over a trifle matter and at one stage Saiful's friend Sohag stabbed him indiscriminately. Critically injured Saiful was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries, she said.

Our correspondent from Khagrachhari adds: Unidentified criminals hacked a man to death at Dharmagarh area in sadar upazila of the district on Thursday.

The victim Sona Mia, 50, a day labourer of the area, was called out of his house and hacked by six to seven masked men around 2:00am, said Officer-in-Charge of Sadar Police Station Abul Kalam.

His family rushed him to sadar

hospital where he succumbed to his injuries around 10:30am, added the OC.

Our correspondent from Gazipur reports: Police recovered the body of a Textile Engineer from a water body under Gazipur municipality of the district on Thursday morning.

The deceased Abdullah-Al-Mosabbir, 27, is son of late Abdul Kader Pathary of Baluchakuli village of the area.

Sources said Mosabbir went missing after three of his neighbours call him out of his residence on Tuesday night.

Our correspondent from Gopalganj adds: A man was killed and at least 20 others were injured in a clash between two groups over previous enmity at Bamondanga village under Moksudpur upazila of the district on Thursday.

The deceased is Kawsar Khan, 45, of the village. Of the injured, nine people were rushed to Moksudpur upazila health complex.

Supporters of Abed Ali and Nuru Sheikh of the village, equipped with local weapons, swooped on each other centring previous enmity, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Sanowar Hossain of Sindhiaghat police investigation centre.

Critically injured Kawsar succumbed to his injuries on way to DMCH.

Our correspondent from Chapainawabganj reports: At least 20 people were injured and over fifty houses ransacked as alleged supporters of two former and current upazila members clashed at Narayanpur union of sadar upazila in Chapainawabganj yesterday over establishing a market.

Locals said at least 200 to 250 bombs were exploded during the clash.

Seriously injured Niamat Ali of Narayanpur and Umar Ali of Daingapara were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

## MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES AGAINST KHALEDA, HARRIS ACC investigation continues

BSS, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is conducting inquiries into money laundering charges against BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and her former political secretary Harris Chowdhury alongside a dozen high profile political and non-political persons.

"ACC is currently conducting inquiries into around 15 allegations of money laundering against some people including Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and Harris Chowdhury", Advocate Md Khurshid Alam Khan, lawyer of the commission, told the news agency yesterday.

ACC has already filed around 30 money laundering cases against a number of people including Khaleda's two sons Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko, BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, former BNP shipping minister late Akbar

Hossain's son Ismail Hossain Simon, businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, former chairman of Proshika Qazi Faruque Ahmed, his son Qazi Rubayat Ahmed, unipay2u Chairman Shahiduzzaman alias Shahin, its Managing Director Muntasir Hossain, and Assistant Manager of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Arshad Ali.

Trial of one of the money laundering cases had already been completed, in which Koko and Simon were convicted of laundering SGD 2,884,000 and USD 932,000 to Singapore and jailed for six years and fined Tk 19.04 crore.

Around 15 cases of money laundering are under trial while 15 others under investigation, an ACC official said, adding that most of such cases were lodged during the immediate past caretaker government.

ACC on July 7, 2010 pressed money-laundering charges against BNP Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman and

his business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun on charge of laundering Tk 20.41 crore between 2003 and 2007.

On August 11 this year, the High Court vacated its earlier stay order that cleared the way for continuing a money laundering case filed against Qazi Faruque Ahmed, former chairman of Proshika, and his son Qazi Rubayat Ahmed on charge of laundering Tk 1.03 crore.

ACC on October 11, 2009 sued unipay2u Chairman Shahiduzzaman alias Shahin and Managing Director Muntasir Hossain on charges of fraudulently collected Tk 246.13 crore and split the cash into their own and the organisation's accounts to conceal the source of the fund.

The commission earlier sued BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury on charges of laundering \$250,000 and HK\$100,000 (\$12,864) to buy Beximco Pharmaceuticals' global depository receipts (GDRs).

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Prof. Moniruzzaman, a noted academician, litterateur, and media personality.

On the occasion, his family members will arrange doa and milad mahfil at his village home in Jessore, says a press release.

Besides, different cultural organisations will organise various programmes to commemorate the renowned lyricist.

Versatile talent of Prof. Moniruzzaman, also former chairman of Bangla department of Dhaka University (DU), left marks in various sectors of our cultural arena. He also wrote many songs and poems in light of the language movement and liberation war of the country.

## MANMOHAN'S VISIT Indian media for meeting Dhaka's concerns

BSS, Dhaka

Indian media seem to be highly optimistic about a positive outcome of Indian prime minister's Dhaka visit, expecting that the event would take bilateral ties to a new trajectory which would have an impact on regional cooperation.

Most of the major Indian newspapers carried a number of opinionated articles and editorials beside reports on the planned maiden Bangladesh visit by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh from September 6 to 7.

The writings visibly noted the expectation that the visit would help the two neighbours cement their ties particularly on political and economic fronts.

Senior columnists, high profile foreign relation experts and former diplomats opined that Bangladesh's gesture to India on several sensitive issues in recent years was the key.

This largely created an atmosphere where New Delhi should reciprocate in due manner to address Bangladesh's concerns and expectations, they said.

The Telegraph carried a signed article by former Indian foreign secretary Krishnan Srinivasan yesterday with a headline "HISTORY TO BE MADE". It advised New Delhi to discard the "protectionist lobbies and vested interests" to develop ties with Bangladesh.

The article reads, "Now is the

right moment, for the Indian Prime Minister has to act out of character. He has to enforce his will on recalcitrant chief ministers, ministers, and bureaucrats.

"He has to brush aside Indian protectionist lobbies and vested interests in pursuit of a larger and wider vision.

"It is a rare chance for Manmohan Singh to earn the well-merited salutes of not only India and Bangladesh but the whole subcontinent... if he fails, he will be derided as a busted flush."

Srinivasan strongly supported Bangladesh's demand for duty free access of its products to Indian markets. In this regard, he said, "If India gave duty-free access to all Bangladesh products, it would hardly affect the current overall trade imbalance that is heavily in favour of India."

The newspaper carried an interview of a high-profile Indian diplomat Deb Mukherjee who said, "Bangladesh is in many ways India's most important neighbour, and we haven't done quite enough to raise the relationship to a partnership level.

"I expect some kind of an agreement on the Teesta. I expect the border issues of demarcation, exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions to be resolved by then.

"And I hope Dr Singh would be able to carry a trade package with him to Dhaka."

The Hindu carried an article by former Indian high commissioner to Pakistan G Parthasarathy saying high trade deficit "on which Bangladesh has a legitimate grievance will hopefully be addressed" during Manmohan's visit.

"Bangladesh has been asking us to relax our garment import curbs. While the Commerce Minister, Mr Anand Sharma, demurred, one hopes Dr Singh will show accommodation on this score," the article read.

Noted researcher Sanjaya Baru in an article in Business Standard said if a new strategic partnership took the expected step forward, it could "herald a new beginning for the eastern sub-region of South Asia including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India."

"Indeed, the Dhaka visit could become this year's most important foreign policy initiative by Dr Singh," read the article headlined South Asian Crossroads.

Business Line in a story says, "If Mr Jyoti Basu played a key role in fashioning the 1996 Agreement for sharing the waters of the Ganges, Chief Minister Ms Mamata Banerjee will inevitably be a key player in taking forward the India-Bangladesh relationship in areas like border management and sharing of river waters."

The article by Biswajit Dhar of

New Delhi-based Research and Information System for Developing Countries is titled "Making a Trade-friendly Border".

There, Singh's visit assumes importance as it gives hope to redeem the pledges that the two countries made to promote bilateral economic relations during the January 2010 visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, it said.

Nepal-based journal Himal in a story said, "Now India needs to respond to what Dhaka desperately needs: the promise of adequate payment for transit through Bangladesh to reach the Indian Northeast, and the dropping of trade barriers so that the balance of trade currently in New Delhi's favour - will correct itself.

"On the ground, beyond resolving the nagging border disputes, New Delhi must also put an end to the shootings at the frontier by Border Security Force (BSF), which continue to kill innocent economic migrants and householders.

"If New Delhi's political class can now look to India's long-term interests and rein in its sometimes rigid bureaucracy, and if Sheikh Hasina is successful in overriding knee jerk anti-Indianism - as looks likely - a new era of economic growth could well be in the offing in the Ganges - Brahmaputra (Padma-Jamuna) region."

## Ctg hospital gutted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Valuables worth Tk 5 lakh were gutted in a fire at a private hospital on OR Nijam Road under Panchlaish Police Station of the port city Thursday.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit in the CCU room on the fifth floor of the Metropolitan Hospital Ltd around 7:10pm, said fire service sources.

Fire fighters from Chandanpura Fire Station extinguished the blaze around 7:35pm.

Many medical instruments of the CCU room were burnt in the fire.

### WEATHER TODAY

#### Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, and Sylhet divisions and at few places over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions in 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls may occur at places, met office said.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:15pm today and rises at 5:41am tomorrow.**

Country's highest temperature 34.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.2 degrees Celsius at Cox's Bazar and Sylhet.

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	32.0	26.2	72	91
Chittagong	28.6	25.4	87	85
Rajshahi	33.8	26.0	81	76
Rangpur	34.0	26.5	80	70
Khulna	30.0	25.2	91	85
Barisal	32.0	26.5	76	99
Sylhet	34.5	24.2	69	66

## Abidur Reza Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 6th death anniversary of renowned Awami League leader and

parliamentarian Abidur Reza Khan, says a press release.

On this occasion, Abidur Reza Khan Foundation will organise programmes including recitation from the Holy Qur'an and wreath laying ceremony at his mausoleum at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the morning.

His family will organise a milad mahfil on September 9 at his residence at the city's Elephant Road.

## Abul Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first death anniversary of Abul Hossain, a businessman and social worker, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 93, Shantinagar in the city after Zohr prayers. Relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.