

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



My Father; His Buddha Narikel Tree

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

My Father's Tree

In one of my earliest memories, my father stands patiently under a *Krishnachura* tree in our Sylhet home, right hand holding a microphone while the left cradles a small reel-to-reel tape recorder where he collected various bird songs. It is spring and the tree is awash in red flowers. He is waiting for a *bou-katha-ka*o bird to start singing for his recorder. Bored with the utter silence he demands, I leave his side, but later that afternoon, he plays back the bird songs for his family. They sound scratchy and distant - even muffled occasionally - but are magical to my young ears.

Decades later, when I search my memory for guidance from him, I find little direct advice, most of it health related. “Eat fresh fruits,” or “Exercise regularly.” Any worldly or serious matter was to be resolved on my own: “Do what you think is right.” That was his way of ensuring independent children.

There was one memorable exception to his hands-off policy.

When I was in Class Three, my parents asked me to write an essay on “The Cow.” The result, which began with “Cow S A” and went downhill from there, shocked my father. He resolved to fix my English. Every evening after work for the next three months, he rigorously tutored me, navigating me through the treacherous waters of English grammar.

For the nation, too, he dutifully did his part. In 1952, while studying at Dhaka University, he joined the Language Movement. On February 21,

while demonstrating, he crossed a police barricade at the University. Police attacked him, beat him up, and left him unconscious. Friends rushed him to Dhaka Medical College hospital, where he was treated. A few years before his death, citizens of Sylhet formally honoured him as a *Bhasha Shoinik*.

Among his friends he was celebrated for his wit and practical jokes. He once attached a car jack to the bottom of a bed where his older cousin was sleeping and slowly tilted the entire bed, creating a seismic shock for his sleepy victim. Another time, protesting against his mother’s dictum, he dove into a nearby pond and stayed in there for the entire day, chanting “I’d rather die of pneumonia,” until she changed her mind.

For many years, my father and two uncles had their office in Dhaka’s Dilkusha, near Gono Bhaban (President’s House.) Inside the Bhaban grounds were some magnificent tall trees. The grounds were closed to the public, but my father wanted to grow those trees himself. So he paid a guard ten taka to bring him seeds which had dropped from the trees. These, he planted and nurtured.

After four decades, one of the trees that my father planted, a *Buddha Narikel*, is over six stories high, standing strong and graceful.

January 7th was the fourth death anniversary of Mr. Ahmed Kabir Choudhury. I pray he is resting in peace.

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AMENDMENT TO CRPC, EVIDENCE ACT

Pre-case investigation, use of physical evidence proposed

BSS, Dhaka

Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs is scrutinising proposals to amend Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Evidence Act.

The proposal for CrPC allows police to start investigation into an offence before filing of a case, a system being practiced for a long time in many countries, said police officials.

Moreover, the amendment to Evidence Act approves the examination of physical evidence such as blood, saliva, sweat and sperm to identify criminals.

The ministry would also see whether such changes will hamper civil law proceedings or not, the ministry sources said.

Existing laws do not have any provision for use of physical evidence though investigators are often using such evidence to catch criminals, especially in cases involving

serious crimes.

“Probe based on physical evidence will replace the age-old statement-based investigations,” said Saiful Alam, deputy inspector general of Criminal Investigation Department.

Investigations based on physical evidence would help prevent innocent people from being accused in cases based on statements of criminals, said a police source.

Inclusion of use of physical evidence in Evidence Act 1995 will not hamper the civil law, rather it will help proceedings under both criminal and civil laws, Advocate M Khurshid Alam Khan told the news agency yesterday.

For example, DNA test could easily settle property disputes and identify criminals, he said, adding that such amendments would help law enforcers unearth crimes quickly.



Save Nature and Wildlife holds a human chain before Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding a stop to Tipaimukh dam's construction.

PHOTO: STAR

13 held for possessing arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 13 people and recovered two foreign pistols, four magazines of bullet, some local arms, two bottles of wine and four bottles of phensidyl from their possession at Mirzanagar in Ashulia on the outskirts of the city yesterday.

The arrested were Rassel Dewan, 28, Md Ripon, 25, Md Alam, 26, Md Maniruzzaman, 20, Md Babu, 18, Shree Sujoy, 27, Md Sumon, 26, Md Roni, 26, Masum Anwar, 26, Abdul Mannan, 32, Tota Mia, 45, Nurul Islam, 28, and Ziaur Rahman 35.

Book on War of Liberation launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The unveiling ceremony of a book, From Protest to Freedom: The Birth of Bangladesh, written by Prof Mokerrom Hossain of Virginia State University in the US, was held in the city’s Liberation War Museum recently.

National Professor AF Salahuddin Ahmed, former commerce secretary Suhel Ahmed Choudhury, historian Shahriar ZR Iqbal, Prof Mahmud Shah Quersh, Fazole Rabbi, Mokerrom, Shahitya Prokash Director Mofidul Hoque and journalist Asjadul Kibria were present.

The book is priced at Tk 500.

Samson Chy - an inspiration to nation

Speakers tell Pabna citizens' condolence meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

With his death, the Pabna people lost their guardian while the country lost a brilliant entrepreneur and an asset to the nation, said speakers at a citizens' condolence meeting in Pabna in memory of Samson H Chowdhury, former chairman of Square Group.

Pabna Press Club organised the meeting at its auditorium on Thursday with its President Prof Shibojit Nag in the chair.

Leaders and activists of different social, political and cultural organisations of Pabna attended on the occasion.

“Samson H Chowdhury

started his business venture on a small scale from a village in Pabna some 50 years ago, but today his business covers 40 countries around the world.

More than 35,000 families across the country are dependent on his Square Group, which is a great contribution to the country's social and economic development,” the speakers said.

“Although he (Samson) reached the topmost position in the country through his firm devotion to work, yet he never forgot his roots. He loved the people and contributed in many social projects besides his business for their real development,” they said, urging all to take inspiration from his life to lead the betterment of the nation.



Samson H Chowdhury

Pointing out Samson's role in the War of Liberation, the speakers said, “He sought international help during the war through his dramatic description of the genocide, conducted by the Pakistan occupation army on the Bangalees, in his

letter to the Christian community around the world.”

He also sent his three sons to join the liberation war, they said.

“Using the spirit of the liberation war, he struggled to build the economic foundation of the country. He believed that the development of the private sector meant the economic development of the entire nation and thus spread out his business,” they added.

Establishing Square pharmaceuticals in Pabna town in 1958 with his three friends, Samson did not look back and his perfect leadership lead the Square Group to become one of the biggest corporate houses of the country.

Veteran AL leader Advocate Amzad Hossain, Pabna Bar Association President Advocate Abdul Matin Miah, Pabna Chamber of Commerce Senior Vice-President Mahabubul Alam Mukul, Pabna district BNP Vice-President Abdullah Al Mahamud Mannan, educationalist Prof Md Nurunnabi, Pabna Annoda Gobinda Public Library Secretary Abdul Matin Khan, columnist Ronesh Maitra, journalist Anwarul Haque and freedom fighter Robiul Islam Robi spoke on Samson's life and works.

Samson H Chowdhury died in Singapore on January 5 at the age of 89 due to old-age complications.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Amena Khatun, wife of poet Ameer Ali Chishti, will be held at Samasabad at Nawabganj on the outskirts of the city after Zohr prayers today, says a press release.

She was the mother of noted singers of Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television Sardar Ashrafuddin Babul and Sardar Afsaruddin.

Relatives, friends, and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

She passed away on Thursday due to old age complications at the age of 90.

NEWS IN

brief

BSF yet to return youth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The BSF has yet to return the Bangladeshi youth who the Indian security force had picked up from Lalakhall border of Jaintapur upzila on Thursday morning.

Basher Uddin, 24, of the upazila's Anjagram village, was caught on suspicion that he might be involved in smuggling. Before detention, Basher was grazing his cows near the border.

Nayek Subedar Nazrul Islam, in-charge of Lalakhall Camp of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), said the BSF of Jaliakhola Camp admitted that it picked up the youth suspecting him to be involved in smuggling and he was handed over to Shillong police.

Qatar Coast Guard team leaves

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of Qatar Coast Guard, led by Director General of Qatar Coast Guard Brigadier Naval Staff Ali Ahmed Saif Al Badid Al Manai, left Dhaka yesterday ending an eight-day visit to Bangladesh.

During the visit, Al Manai met Navy Chief Vice Admiral ZU Ahmed at naval headquarters and discussed a proposal to recruit skilled manpower from Bangladesh Navy for Qatar Coast Guard.

During the meeting, the delegation signed an agreement on the recruitment of skilled manpower from Bangladesh Navy, said a release of ISPR.

Monno Medical College opens

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Monno Medical College started its journey through a reception to its first batch MBBS students at its campus in Manikganj yesterday.

HR Khan Monno, chairman of the governing body of the college, urged the freshers to be good people, as good behaviour is very necessary for doctors.

He hoped that the medical college would soon earn reputation. Founded by HR Khan, a former minister and prominent industrialist, the college will be run under Monno Welfare trust.

A total of 47 students took admission in the private medical college as the first batch.

1,200 tolas of gold jewellery looted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A burglary gang made a getaway with gold jewellery weighing around 1,200 tolas from a jewellery shop in the city's Naya Paltan area.

The robbery of Sunflower Jewellers on the ground floor of Paltan Super Market took place sometime between Wednesday and Thursday night.

The gang first entered Bahar Cosmetics, next to the jewellery shop, by breaking off all its locks. Later they cut a hole in the partition wall between the two shops, said Paltan police.

They broke open iron lockers, showcases and took away the jewellery.

Sanjaybroto Nag, brother of jewellery shop owner Satyabroto Nag, said they opened the shop around 11:00am yesterday and found the gold jewellery missing. There were only about 25 tolas of gold left in the shop.

Shop employee Pronoy Krishna Das said the shutters of the shop were found locked yesterday morning. They noticed the robbery incident only after entering the shop.

He said all the six employees left the shop around 8:30pm on Wednesday after locking its shutters. The market was closed on Thursday for weekly holiday.

According to Sanjay, six watchmen employed by the market association guard the two-story shopping complex round the clock in two shifts.

"Security guards were in the complex for the whole night. But they didn't hear any sound of breaking the locks, cutting the wall or breaking the showcases, which is quite unbelievable," he maintained.

This was the second burglary of the shop after it was first looted in 2001. A case is pending with a court in this regard, added Sanjay.

Several shop owners of the market told this correspondent that a part of the rooftop of the market complex is made of tin and has several holes through which one can easily steal into the building from the roofs of adjacent buildings.

Police have picked up Mohammad Bahar, proprietor of Bahar Cosmetics, and three watchmen for interrogation.

A case has been filed with Paltan Police Station in this connection.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Mild to moderate coldwave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Tangail, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Jessore, Kushtia, Satkhira, Barisal and Khopupara and it may spread to the rest of Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal divisions.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may fall by 1-2 degrees Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:32pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow. Country's highest temperature 25.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 07.2 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

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	19.6	10.7	90	63
Chittagong	20.0	15.2	71	60
Rajshahi	20.0	09.4	85	72
Rangpur	19.0	09.6	91	80
Khulna	21.2	10.2	88	91
Barisal	20.7	09.6	97	84
Sylhet	21.0	14.2	86	77
Cox's Bazar	22.8	14.5	69	51