

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Ajahad and Feroz. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Ijtema Encounters

The four boys are arguing over a card game. They are hidden behind a tea stall on a path that was trodden by millions in three days. I compose and take a picture, but they are completely engrossed in their bid to win.

Waiting for the Akheri Munajat (final prayer) at the Bishwa Istema, I am meeting and photographing people.

The boys are Shumon, Shajon, Mishan and Shakib. I ask them about the Istema. They were busy selling. Shumon sold Muri, Shajon sold boiled eggs and Mishan sold lemonade for 10 Taka per glass.

The fourth boy Shakib remains quiet. After some prodding, he says he sold clean water in *bodnas* for attendees to perform their Waju (washing before prayers), for five taka per *bodna*.

They all live in the *bustee* nearby.

I find 80-year-old Banesa and her daughters Khaleda and Faria waiting for the Munajat near a foot over bridge. They arrived here yesterday from Kishoreganj in a bus, with a group totalling nineteen people. “What do you do in Kishoreganj?” I ask. “We are farmers. We grow rice and vegetables,” Khaleda replies. What kind of vegetables? “Oh, so many kinds... *mula*, eggplant, *shim*, onions.”

“Have you made some profits this year?” I ask. “Yes, our crops did well,” the sisters, who have families and children, say happily.

How was the Istema? “It was a good experience,” says Faria, “We will come again next year.”

Worry-beads (*tosbih*), caps and religious paraphernalia are being sold in many stalls. In one such stall, I spy a smiling boy through the strands of hanging *tosbihs* and take two quick pictures. His father sits next to him.

He is Ajahad Chishtia. His son Feroz is ten years old; daughter Chameli is five.

“What is selling well here?” I ask. Besides *tosbihs*, which go for Taka 25-40, he mentions hats and gemstones. “Gemstones? For men?” I ask. “Yes, particularly the Akik stone,” he replies. Worn on a ring, this stone brings good health and blessings, he claims.

I ask Ajahad where he lives. “Right here,” he says, pointing to the small tin-roof house abutting his stall.

Then I ask the son, Feroz, where he goes to school. He keeps smiling but remains quiet. Sensing my confusion, Ajahad intercedes. “He is *protibondhi* - he cannot speak.” What about special schools? “They are far - the closest is in Mirpur,” he says.

It is only after I talk to them that I realise the breadth of security forces. There is SWAT, RAB, District Police, Metropolitan Police, Traffic Police, Ansars, Battalion police and plainclothesmen. All are courteous and friendly. At several buildings I search around looking for stairs to the roof (for my photos.) Helpful guides appear magically each time. At noon I walk into a confectionary store for a bottle of Mum. After gulping it down, I search my pockets for cash. “That’s ok, you look thirsty - I can’t take money from you!” says the owner.

I feel lucky to have met so many generous souls today.

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Trade fair abuzz with visitors

Thousands of visitors thronged the ongoing “Dhaka International Trade Fair 2012” in the city’s Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday to catch a glimpse and pick the best bargains of products and services being showcased.

A total of 506 stalls and pavilions, including that of 47 foreign companies from 12 countries, were erected in the country’s largest exposition organised by Export Promotion Bureau and Ministry of Commerce.

The fair, in its 17th year, aims at promoting local manufactures and producers and providing a platform for companies to market their brands, offer discounts and present their latest products, said the organisers.

Products on sale include machinery, carpets, cosmetics, electronic, jute, leather and sports goods, sanitary items, toys, ceramics, locally made fabrics, cables, processed food, furniture and handicrafts.

“We really do not get enough scope to go out and shop,” said one visitor, Maksudur Rahman, employee of a private firm. “The fair offers the opportunity to choose from a variety of products and services.”

Pavilions selling household and kitchen items were seen brimming with female visitors yesterday.

Assistant General Manager (marketing) of Talukder Group, Mazharul Islam, said they were offering around 100 types of plastic items for sale.

In-charge of Karupannya Rangpur Ltd’s pavilion, Ashequr Rahman Rumel, said with jute as their theme this year, they were selling floor coverings and home furnishings alongside various cotton and polyester items.

Assistant Marketing Manager of Rangs Electronics Ltd, Mohaiminul Ishahaq, said they were showcasing the company’s latest products including televisions with internet service and high definition media players.

Around 200 visitors were arriving to register with bKash, a mobile financial service provider, every day, said the company’s representative Mahmudul Hasan.

Ziaur Rahman, the pavilion in-charge of

The fair, in its 17th year, aims at promoting local manufactures and producers and providing a platform for companies to market their brands, offer discounts and present their latest products

Athena Furniture and Home Décor, a sister concern of Anwar Group of Industries, said they were trying to familiarise the company, launched in 2004, with the customers through their first-ever pavilion.

Representatives of Texmart, an apparel house, said they were offering discounts ranging from 40 to 60 percent in both male and female clothing.

The exposition also offers business opportunities for those who can not afford to set up a stall. A 22-year-old man, Saiful Islam, said he goes around the fair selling around 30 plastic shopping bags each day, profiting Tk 20 apiece.

There are around 250 hawkers like him at the fair, he added.

A pavilion exhibiting rare pictures of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was also set up at the fair, said one visitor, Khairul Islam, a third-year student of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Agricultural University.

Meanwhile, representatives of two pavilions, Kiam Metal and Delhi Aluminum, selling kitchen items, pelted bricks at each other around 1:00pm yesterday over encroaching on pavilion space, said Kamal Hossain, in-charge of police at the fair.

Sayed Belal Hossain, deputy director of Export Promotion Bureau, said they would take legal action against those responsible and more police personnel will be deployed to ensure security at the fair.

The month-long fair, which began on January 1, is open from 10:00am to 10:00pm every day. The entry fee for adults is Tk 20 and for children is Tk 10.



Local artists perform a traditional dance during a cultural programme of the Rajpunnah festival of the Mong circle at Rajbari grounds of Khagrachhari town yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Wife, son meet Ghulam Azam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam, who is detained for crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971, met him at the prison cell at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) yesterday.

Ghulam Azam’s wife Syeda Afifa Azam, son former Brig Gen Abdullahil Aman Azmi and his wife visited the former Jamaat chief for half an hour from 3:00pm, said Brig Gen Abdul Majid Bhuiya, director of BSMMU.

“Ghulam Azam’s family members met him with permission of the jail authorities” said the BSMMU director adding, “Jail guards and attendants of BSMMU were present during the half an hour visit.”

Meanwhile, after the visit, Ghulam Azam’s wife Afifa Azam in a press statement expressed her dissatisfaction over supply of foods and other facilities.

International Crimes Tribunal on January 11 ordered to sent Ghulam Azam to jail after he appeared before the tribunal and later he was shifted to the BSMMU prison cell for his ailing condition.

India against border killing: Envoy

BSS, Narail

Acting Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sanjay Bhattacharyya yesterday said India does not want that any Bangladeshi is killed on the border.

The Indian authorities are taking prompt action against killing of any innocent Bangladeshi on the border, he told journalists at Narail Circuit house.

The Indian envoy had a stopover at Narail Circuit House on his way to Benapole, Jessore.

During the stopover, he visited museum of renowned artist SM Sultan.

The Indian high commissioner visited the historic Bhadraghat and Shree Shree Ramkrishna Ashram.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Hawlader Md Rafiqul Bari and officials of the local administration, among others, were present on the occasion.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT TO FEMALE STUDENT  
University teacher suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A lecturer of Islamic University was suspended yesterday over sexual harassment charges filed with the university authorities by a female student.

The suspended teacher, Md Asaduzzaman, joined the Department of Finance and Marketing around a year back.

The university authorities took the decision after the Academic Committee’s emergency meeting, called by the department’s chairman and the university Proctor Dr Mahbulul Arfin on Thursday, found the allegations true, said Registrar Dr Moslem Uddin.

A five-member probe body led by Prof Dr Nasim Banu of politics and public administration department was also formed to further investigate into the allegation, said sources at the university’s administration.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 52nd death anniversary of Barrister Ahmed Ali Khan, MA (Cambridge University) and Bar-at-Law in 1901 from England.

Ahmed, former member of the then Assam Legislative Assembly and president of Assam Congress, was hailing from Sylhet, said a press release.

Relatives and friends are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Artists render a song during “Muktir Utsab 2012” organised by Liberation War Museum at the playground adjacent to Dhaka University’s gymnasium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

NEWS IN *brief*

20km bus rapid transit soon

BSS, Dhaka

As a part of reducing traffic congestion in Dhaka, a 20km Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Gazipur intersection at a cost of US\$55 million will be constructed soon.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is likely to be signed between Bangladesh and donor agencies in February this year, said a handout on Thursday quoting the authorities concerned as saying after a meeting with ADB representatives.

A seven-member delegation of ADB led by its Rural Development Expert David Margonsztern called on Communications Minister Obaidul Quader at his secretariat office.

The meeting was also informed overall progress of the project, including route planning, organising structure and matter related to land requisition for the BRT.

Secretary of Roads and Highway MAN Siddique, Secretary of Bridge Division Khandkar Anwarul Islam, Chief Engineer of Roads and Highways Aminur Rahman Lasker, Dr SM Salehuddin also were present on the occasion.

Slaughtered body recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police recovered the slaughtered body of a farmer at Shibnagar village in Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Haider Ali, 40, of the village.

Police, quoting the victim’s brother Chad Ali, said Haider went out of his residence at about 8:30pm on Thursday after receiving a call on his mobile phone. Since then he had been missing.

Local people found his body at Beltala field, about one kilometre off the house.

On information, Damurhuda police recovered the body at about 11:30am.

Chad filed a case with Damurhuda Police Station.

Double murder: Youth arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth has been arrested in connection with the killing of two people inside the city’s Botanical Garden on January 10.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) detained Anwar Hossain, 28, from Kumarkhali of Kushtia on Wednesday and handed him over to Shah Ali Police Station on Thursday.

Anwar confessed that he was one of the eleven persons who were involved in the killing of the two, said Sub-Inspector Yasin Munshi of the police station.

Police recovered the bodies of Rajib and Rubel from Botanical Garden on January 11 and 13 respectively.

The police official said Rajib and Rubel had a quarrel with the alleged killers over the business of garments’ wastage (jhut).

Cancellation of BMDC act demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a rally of village doctors yesterday demanded cancellation of the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) act.

The district unit of Village Doctors Unity Council organised the rally at Chittagong Central Shaheed Minar to press home their demand.

Mainuddin Khan Badal MP, Hasina Mannan MP, former lawmaker Mazharul Haque Chowdhury, the city Awami League general secretary Kazi Enamul Haque Danu, freedom fighter Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, former vice chairman of Muktijoddha Sangsad Central Command Council Abdul Matin Chowdhury, joint secretary of Gano Odikar Mancha Rakhai Chandra Banik and leaders from different political parties and councils spoke at the rally with the council’s Chittagong convener Oliur Rahman in the chair.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

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

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:37 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43 am.

Country’s highest temperature 28.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and Rangamati and lowest 11.5 degrees at Srimangal and Hatia.

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	25.7	15.6	68	72
Chittagong	24.0	17.0	96	88
Rajshahi	22.6	14.6	98	86
Rangpur	22.5	11.7	93	79
Khulna	27.3	18.0	90	73
Barisal	25.0	14.8	99	90
Sylhet	27.0	15.5	81	87
Cox’s Bazar	27.2	12.8	97	85