

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

My *Holi* Adventure

Behind the court-kachari, the entrance to Shakhariabazar is barricaded. Curious onlookers and policemen peer into the dark empty street. A few diehards cross over; the crowd watches them with a mix of envy and pity. Two figures approach from the other side. Their cameras, hanging from the neck, are covered with polythene bags. Their faces are covered in deep purple, red and indigo from which their eyes seem to jump out.

It is Holi, festival of colours, in old Dhaka.

Also known as Dol in Bengali - from Radha and Krishna on a *Dolna* (swing) - this Hindu festival celebrates their love and spring's arrival. Festivities here go back many decades. "In the sixties, as children, we visited Tantibazar and Sakharibazar where we were fascinated by small displays of Radha-Krishna on the swing," says Dr. Dipen Bhattacharya, now a physicist in the US. Holi may have originated centuries ago in Bengal, but now it is celebrated in many places worldwide.

Soon my desire to photograph overcomes my fear of being doused in colour. And so, clutching my largish camera in one hand and a thin plastic bag in the other, I step across the barricade.

Shops are closed. The road, normally packed, is mostly empty. Groups of young people run around, grabbing each other and applying colour. Men, women, children (and some foreigners) have joined in. Children are particularly joyous.

Down the road, a sound system thumps loud music. A spontaneous group dance breaks out at the strains of a popular Bangla song. A clay *kolshi* full of paint is hoisted high on a bamboo suspended across the road. Underneath, a mass of people wait for this colour piñata to drench them.

Revellers spread colours in many ways. Some apply the powdered dye directly on faces. Projectile weapons - either water guns or plastic bottles with holes on their lids - are popular. Some prefer dumping entire buckets of coloured water on their playmates, jumping them from behind.

My camera protects me from the colourful attacks. "Please... it is very expensive," becomes my defence. Most people understand, but I still get drenched from above and behind. Luckily my camera is in plastic then.

My relatively untouched face must look tempting, so I move cautiously. There is an unspoken



Holi in Tantibazar.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

camaraderie among photographers covering the event. Some offer me sturdy plastic bags for my camera.

Good cheer and excitement pervades the air, an abandonment of worries and concerns. Somehow though, I am a distant watcher. Next year, perhaps I will leave the camera behind and dive in.

Two hours later, I feel I have used up my good luck and decide to exit via Tantibazar. A group of teenagers yells from behind: "What? No colour, uncle?" and gives chase in a friendly sort of way. At a jeweller's, a boy watches from a shuttered door. I photograph him. Then I notice his blue hands.

Outside the barricade, I heave a sigh of relief. What a major accomplishment: photographing Holi in old Dhaka with my face untouched!

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CHARGING EXTRA FEES AT IMT

100 graduates can't start career for certificates

PALASH RAHMAN

About 100 students of a private medical institute could not enter their career for two years as its authorities are not issuing their graduation certificates demanding extra course fees.

The students had enrolled at Institute of Medical Technology (IMT) in 2004-05 sessions (first batch) to pursue the four-year BSc degree in health technology.

The IMT, though, did not have the approval from the Directorate of Health Services and Dhaka University until the beginning of 2006-07 sessions, complained the students.

The first batch of students had taken their last course exam in November, 2009 and the DU authorities had issued their certificates within five months. The examinees however are yet to receive those.

The graduates alleged that though the institute in the city's Mirpur-12 had fixed the total course fees at Tk 1 lakh, its Managing Director Prof Dr Abdul Malek has denied distributing the certificates unless each of them pays an extra Tk 55,000 as course and certificate fees.

The graduates have even failed to register for the March 31 convocation of DU as they could not produce their certificates.

When some students had met Dr Malek to know about the extra fees, he threatened them of suing in criminal cases.

"Though the MD had earlier assured us that we won't have to pay any fees for the wasted academic years, he is now forcing us to pay the extra amount," complained Mustakin Ahmed, a graduate.

Another graduate Ishrat Sultana said the MD had warned them of not returning their main certificates of SSC and HSC exams, unless they pay the claimed amount.

A few of the students paid the additional amount, but for the most it is not possible as they come from middle and lower-middle income families, she added.

"We went to Pallabi Police Station to lodge a general diary (GD) accusing the MD of cheating us, but police refused to record it," said another student Rashidul Hasan.

The IMT had collected Tk 16,000 from each of them to complete training in the fourth year of the course, although they receive training in the public hospitals where no IMT expenses are involved, noted another student.

Refuting all allegations, Dr Malek attributed the loss of academic year to session jam.

"We got the approval in 2004 and started the classes in January the following year," he mentioned.

He blamed the DU authorities for not allowing the graduates in the convocation, but could not clarify why the students could not take the exams in the first two years.

Asked about the complaints, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique told The Daily Star that they have been informed about the irregularities in the IMT.

"The DU will form a committee soon to probe the matter. We will take strict action against them if found guilty," he said.

Classes at the IMT has remained closed for indefinite period. The authorities closed it on March 6 following protests by the graduates.

NEWS IN

brief

5 DU students injured in clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five students of Salimullah Muslim Hall of Dhaka University were injured in a clash between two groups of its students over taking seats at the hall television room last night.

Arafat Raihan, a Masters student of Public Administration department, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, while others were given first aid.

Witnesses said the clash erupted between the two groups soon after the Bangladesh and India cricket

Worker dies trapped in machine

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A worker died while operating a machine at Bayezid Modern Steel Mills in the port city yesterday.

The deceased is Ariful Islam, 22, of Shershah area in city. He came from Dinajpur.

Bayezid Police Station Sub-Inspector Rajesh Barua said Arif was injured as he was trapped in the middle of the machine and the wall around 5:00am.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around

Free healthcare at Champaphul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poor people of Champaphul and adjoining villages, a remote area of Satkhira, are getting primary healthcare service free of cost under Shikhhachariya Shahabuddin Health Service Project.

The project started yesterday on the premises of Champaphul High School of Assasuni upazila in Satkhira.

On the inaugural day, more than 100 people of the locality were given healthcare at the school which is the project's temporary office.

Freedom fighter Prof Abdul Aziz, headmaster of the school, Sheikh Shahidul Islam, acting civil surgeon of Satkhira Sadar Hospital, Dr Rafiqul Islam, and Dr MA Hasanat, an associate professor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and son of renowned personality Sahabuddin, were also present on the

ICDDR,B scientists make international presentations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Researchers and scientists of ICDDR,B made a remarkable number of presentations on global emerging infectious diseases at an international conference in the USA.

The team of researchers and scientists of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) presented 24 presentations, which is the highest number to the International Conference of Emerging Infectious Diseases (ICEID) held in Atlanta from March 11-14, said a press release.

"An outstanding performance such as this at the ICEID conference showcases the enormous productivity and academic rigor of young Bangladeshi scientists," said Dr Stephen P. Luby, head of the

FAO chief arrives tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Director General of UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Jose Graziano da Silva, will arrive in Bangladesh on a two-day visit tomorrow (March 18).

He will hold talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque and Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni.

He is also scheduled to discuss the food security issues of Bangladesh with development partners.

Artists of "Raktakarabi" perform as The Daily Star's tribute to Rabindranath Tagore on his 150th birth anniversary on the first day of the two-day "The Daily Star-Heritage Chatigram History Conference" at Theatre Institute Auditorium of Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Chittagong charms Indian scholars

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Three Indian professors, who have arrived to attend the two-day "The Daily Star-Heritage Chatigram History Conference", beginning yesterday, expressed their appreciation of Chittagong's natural beauty and the hospitality of its people to The Daily Star yesterday.

The most amazing sights were the hills, sea and rivers of Chittagong, the eastern portion of the Ganges Delta, said Dr Ranabir Chakravarti, professor of Ancient History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

"I visited Dhaka in 2004 but this is my first visit to Chittagong," he said, adding that this was the first time he could experience the world renowned hospitality of Chittagong's residents.

"I have had a deep attraction for Bangladesh since childhood, for my paternal uncle's ancestral residence is in Kushtia.

"When I was a college student, I had the opportunity to hear the live telecast of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7 speech in 1971. It continues to inspire me," he said.

Chittagong was the centre point of different vital movements since the British period. Names like Masterda Surya Sen and Preetilata Waddedar are now embedded in the Indian subcontinent's independence movement, he said.

The declaration of Bangladesh's independence came from Kalurghat Betar Kendra (radio centre), also situated in Chittagong, added Dr Ranabir.

Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus, who introduced the microcredit programme to empower residents of the remot-

Dr Sutapa Sinha

est regions, was also from Chittagong, cited the professor.

Another noteworthy person of Chittagong was Abdul Karim Sahityavisharad who played a pioneering role in carrying out research on ancient manuscripts on Bangla literature, he said.

Dr Sutapa Sinha, associate professor of Islamic History and Culture at University of Calcutta, arrived in Bangladesh for the first time.

"What caught my attention while I was on my way from the airport were the beautiful hills around the Tiger Pass area," she said.

"I used to think people here like extra chilli in their food. But on the contrary it was nothing like that in the delicious curries I had at the hotel and one of our friends' house.

"The most delightful thing is the hospitality the people here have offered," she said.

Dr Ranabir Chakravarti

Meanwhile it was the second time Dr Suchandra Ghosh, associate professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture at University of Calcutta, was here in Chittagong.

"I just simply love this place," she said, stating that Chittagong was one of her favourite destination for a visit.

"I read the tale of the Karnaphuli river but to be there in person with boats and the port around the estuary before you was just amazing," she said, adding that the river's name in itself was beautiful.

"Yesterday (Thursday) I had the opportunity to taste Laitta shutki (dry fish) and Koral fish. The curries were delicious," she said. She also praised the locally made rotis (wheat bread).

The one thing which overwhelmed her was the hospitality offered by the residents of Chittagong, she said.

Dr Suchandra Ghosh

WEATHER TODAY

Change in temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:08pm and rises tomorrow at 6:05am.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and Rangamati and lowest 12.7 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	32.4	18.3	51	21
Chittagong	31.2	19.5	57	59
Rajshahi	32.5	15.0	49	37
Rangpur	30.0	14.3	67	40
Khulna	33.6	17.5	72	49
Barisal	33.0	16.8	69	55
Sylhet	31.6	16.9	59	34