

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Marathon Man

Mount Everest, Mathematics Olympiad, Ironman Triathlon: hardly a week goes by when I don't hear of world-class achievements by young Bangladeshis. Recently I had the opportunity to meet one such achiever. Sayyied Kabir (no relation) is a marathon runner, having completed the London and Rome Marathons.

A marathon run commemorates Greek soldier Pheidippides's run from Marathon to Athens in 490 BC to deliver an urgent message of victory in a battle against the Persians in Marathon. Legend says that reaching Athens, Pheidippides burst into the assembly and announced "Nikomen!" (Victory!) before collapsing and dying. The first Olympic Games in 1896 included a marathon. Today, marathons take place globally, with London and New York Marathons being two of the largest. The run is 26.2 miles long.

I visit Sayyied at the office of Newton International, an educational and training firm, where he is Managing Director. Soft-spoken, he has a pleasant and friendly personality which masks the tough resolve needed for marathons.

Getting to the point, I ask: "What does it take?" His surprisingly simple answer: "Anyone with no serious health problems can run a marathon. All it takes is discipline and patience."

Sayyied started long-distance running when he turned forty. "It was my birthday gift to myself. I wanted to do something special," he says.

Was he always a runner? "No, but I played many team sports in Cadet College," he replies. When he started running, he had eight months to prepare for the Rome Marathon, running nightly at Gulshan Ladies Club park.

What were the benefits? There was a sense of well-being and purity that the intense exercise brought, culminating with a tremendous feeling of accomplishment when he completed the marathons. "I never felt fitter in my life," he says. The workouts improved his immune system keeping minor ailments at bay.

I ask him about unexpected surprises, or "Wow!" moments during his marathons. Close family members and friends supported him as he ran, cheering him. During the London Marathon - where 40,000 runners participated - Sayyied was amazed by the massive audience which lined the entire route, encouraging him and other participants. While preparing for the Rome Marathon, he had the memorable experience of running through ancient landmarks with a small group of runners.



PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Sayyied in his office.

What would he advise aspiring marathon runners? The two main ingredients, Sayyied says, are patience and determination. Runners must exercise patience during training. Increasing mileage too quickly may cause injuries. Determination, of course, is needed to complete the training and the actual marathon. While he trained alone, Sayyied suggests beginners train with buddies.

While younger runners may need less time, Sayyied recommends allotting a full year to train for a marathon

Where to start? Sayyied says he learned from regimens available in Google, and from reading books. For training, he built up to 40-50 miles every week which included one long (20-mile) run. As he gradually increased the distance, his determination helped keep him on course.

As I left, I knew Sayyied's story would inspire many runners here in Bangladesh.

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Situation led Tajuddin to buy revolver in 1974

Says his personal secretary

Perturbed by the situation in Bangladesh, Tajuddin Ahmed had purchased a revolver from Washington in October 1974 and expressed concern while leaving for Bangladesh, said his former personal secretary, Dr Faruk Aziz Khan.

"Tajuddin told me, 'You don't know the situation of the country as you don't live there,'" Faruk said, narrating his last meet with Tajuddin while serving as the education counselor at the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC.

He was addressing a discussion organised by Liberation War Museum at its premises in the capital yesterday marking the 87th birth anniversary of Tajuddin, prime minister in the Mujibnagar government during the 1971 Liberation War.

While returning with the newly bought revolver and some bullets, Tajuddin had hinted at the danger looming over Bangladesh, he said.

Tajuddin also said he was not sure for how long he would be able to keep himself safe with the revolver. "I had tried to calm him down," said Faruk.

When Faruk had gone to see Tajuddin off at the airport, he could sense the latter's concern. "I feared something ominous was going to happen and everyone knows what happened next," he said.

Former finance secretary Asaduzzaman introduced him to Tajuddin in Kolkata and he was given the office duties the next day, said Faruk.

Faruk described Tajuddin's pioneering role in forming the Bangladesh government in exile and organising the 1971 Liberation War in the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The ministers of the government in exile had pledged not to return to their families until the country was liberated. "None but Tajuddin remained resolute about his work and promise and he did not see his family for a single day even after falling sick," he said.

"I cannot imagine what would have happened to the country had Tajuddin not been there at that time. Except him, there was none who could be relied upon," said Faruk.

Two electrocuted in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Two people were electrocuted at Elachipur village in Shivalaya upazila in Manikganj early yesterday.

The deceased were Isak Molla, 55, of Daskandi village and Bishu Sheikh, 60, of Elachipur village.

Locals said Isak came in contact with a live electric wire when he was fishing in a water-body (Elachipur Chak) around 5:00am, while Bishu came in contact of the electric wire as he tried to save Isak.

Govt trying to develop anti-Hepatitis B drugs

Discussion told
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is trying to develop medicines to prevent the attacks of Hepatitis B virus (HBV), which kills around five lakh people across the country every year, a BSMMU teachersaidyesterday.

Dr Mamun-al-Mahtab, associate professor of Hepatology at Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), was addressing a discussion organised on the occasion of World Hepatitis Day. The day will be observed today.

About 5.4 percent of the country's population is infected with HBV, and 0.8 percent people have Hepatitis C virus. The viruses are responsible for chronic liver inflammation and liver cirrhosis.

Dr Mahtab said creating awareness among people and checking reuse of syringes could check the HBV infections a great deal.

A person with HBV usually did not expose any symptoms for years, according to the discussants. It can cause chronic liver inflammation and even liver cirrhosis, but the infected person might not feel the presence of the virus.

Only at an advanced stage, the patient can detect the symptoms, but by that time the liver no longer functions normally, they said.

The Association for the Study of the Liver, Dhaka held the discussion with Prime Minister's Advisor on Health and Social Welfare Prof Modassar Ali at Jatiya Press Club.

In his speech, Prof Modassar laid stress on combined efforts of all physicians and extensive research on the viruses.

Prof Selimur Rahman, president of Association for the Study of the Liver, chaired the discussion.



Makeshift shops sell their products occupying the footpaths in the capital's Farmgate area, forcing pedestrians on the road amidst the heavy traffic. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

16 held with fake Janata Bank question papers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) detained 16 people from a city hotel in the early hours yesterday and seized 'fake' question papers for a recruitment test for the post of executive officer at Janata Bank.

Lt Col Kamrul Islam, commanding officer of Rab-10, said the elite force received a tip off on the matter and raided the hotel at Siddique Bazar in old Dhaka around 3:00am.

The team recovered copies of a handwritten question paper containing 100 questions from the detained men, the official said.

The arrested men claimed they were candidates for the Janata Bank exam. They said they made a deal with a man named Khokon who was to provide them with the question paper for the bank's recruitment test in return for taka 4 lakh. The money was to be paid after the examination was held.

The two-hour long recruitment test, meanwhile, was held at 10:00 am yesterday. It was attended by 78,000 job seekers.

The Rab authority however did not find any similarity between the actual test paper and the seized question papers. We are still trying to arrest Khokon, Lt Col Kamrul said.

Two KMC students among five drown

METRO DESK

Two Kushtia Medical College students, two schoolgirls and a boy drowned in Kushtia and Lalmonirhat yesterday.

Our Kushtia correspondent reports: The college students are Faridul Islam Milon, 21, of Dinajpur and Sahajalal Majumdar Rifat of Comilla.

They had gone to the Gorai river for a bath with eight other students without informing the college authorities, said the college principal, Dr Iftekhar Mahmud.

Amidst heavy rain the students had suddenly started sinking in the river. Some fishermen rescued the eight but later it was discovered that Milon and Rifat were missing, he said.

Divers from the fire brigade in Jessore



Milon



Rifat

recovered the bodies in the evening. Three of the female students fell sick and had to be admitted to Kushtia General Hospital, he said.

Meanwhile, the seven-year-old child, Sawkatul Islam, son of Safiul Alam of Courtpara, drowned in the Kushtia Government College pond when he went there to take a bath without informing his parents.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports: The girls, Rozina Khatun, 9, daughter of Atabor Hossain, and Karima Khatun, 9, daughter of Siddique Miah, used to study in class IV at Komlabari Government Primary School.

Police, quoting family members, said the duo went to the Soti river in Baro Komlabari village for a bath and drowned while trying to pluck lotus flowers.

The floating bodies were found about one

NEWS IN brief

Meena to be aired on ABC Radio

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The popular cartoon character Meena will be aired on ABC Radio, a private broadcaster, to facilitate vulnerable and marginalized children to share their views and concerns, said a press release yesterday.

The live radio show, which is designed and conducted by children, will be broadcast for two hours every Friday for the next six months, it said.

The initiative, first of its kind, led by UNICEF Bangladesh in partnership with ABC Radio has been taken to provide such children a platform through a live children's show for two hours every weekend with

Damaged Vietnamese vessel to head for Ctg

UNB, Dhaka

MV Ahn Son, a Vietnamese vessel with a damaged rudder that has been anchored at Sagar Island for the last several days, will leave for Chittagong port soon, reports the Times of India.

The ship was allowed by the Kolkata Port Trust to unload its cargo of logs on to barges at Sagar but not permitted to enter the Kolkata or Haldia ports due to its damaged steering gear. A tug has now been arranged to tow the ship to Chittagong, sources confirmed.

"It [the ship] should be sailing within the next couple of days for Chittagong where repairs will be carried out. It will be towed to Chittagong by a tug. We have already arranged for a tug," a source said.

MV Ahn Son was allowed to offload cargo at Sagar Island on one condition--it would leave within 24

Workers' salary by Aug 9 urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) yesterday demanded that all the factory owners pay the salaries and bonuses of the workers by Ramadan 20.

The demand was placed at a meeting at the Parishad's office on Topkhana Road in the capital yesterday.

The SKOP leaders said if the owners fail to do so, they will have to take responsibilities for any untoward situation.

They said owners of different factories, including garments factories, show their dilly-dally over paying salaries to workers before Eid festivals every year.

Jatiya Sramik League President Shukkur Mahmud

'Pass amended CHT land dispute resolution act soon'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference urged the government to pass the amended Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission (CHTLDRC) Act, 2001 immediately to ensure land rights of the Jumma community.

CHT Jumma Refugee Welfare Association organised the event at Dhaka Reporter's Unity yesterday.

Santoshita Chakma, general secretary of the association also demanded appointment of a competent



Discussion

Bangladesh Society for Human Resource Management and Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital will hold a discussion; Venue: Emmanuelle's Convention Centre, Simanto Square (fifth floor), Dhanmondi; Time: 4:00pm.

Views exchange meeting

Jatiya Torun Projanmo will arrange a views exchange meeting; Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity; Time: 10:00am.

11:00am.

Condolence meeting

Bangladesh Pustak Prokashak O Bikreta Samity will arrange a condolence meeting on legendary writer Humayun Ahmed; Venue: Bangla Bazar premises; Time: 11:00am.

Roundtable

Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad will organise a roundtable; Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity; Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce &



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

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

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:44pm and rises tomorrow at 5:27am.

Country's highest temperature 33.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dinajpur and lowest 23.5 degrees at Teknaf.

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	31.0	26.4	83	77
Chittagong	28.0	25.0	94	94
Rajshahi	32.6	27.1	80	82
Rangpur	32.7	27.4	81	69
Khulna	29.5	27.0	100	99
Barisal	29.4	26.2	97	93