A Weekly Publication of The Daily Star

theSTAR

stories behind the news

4 October, 2013

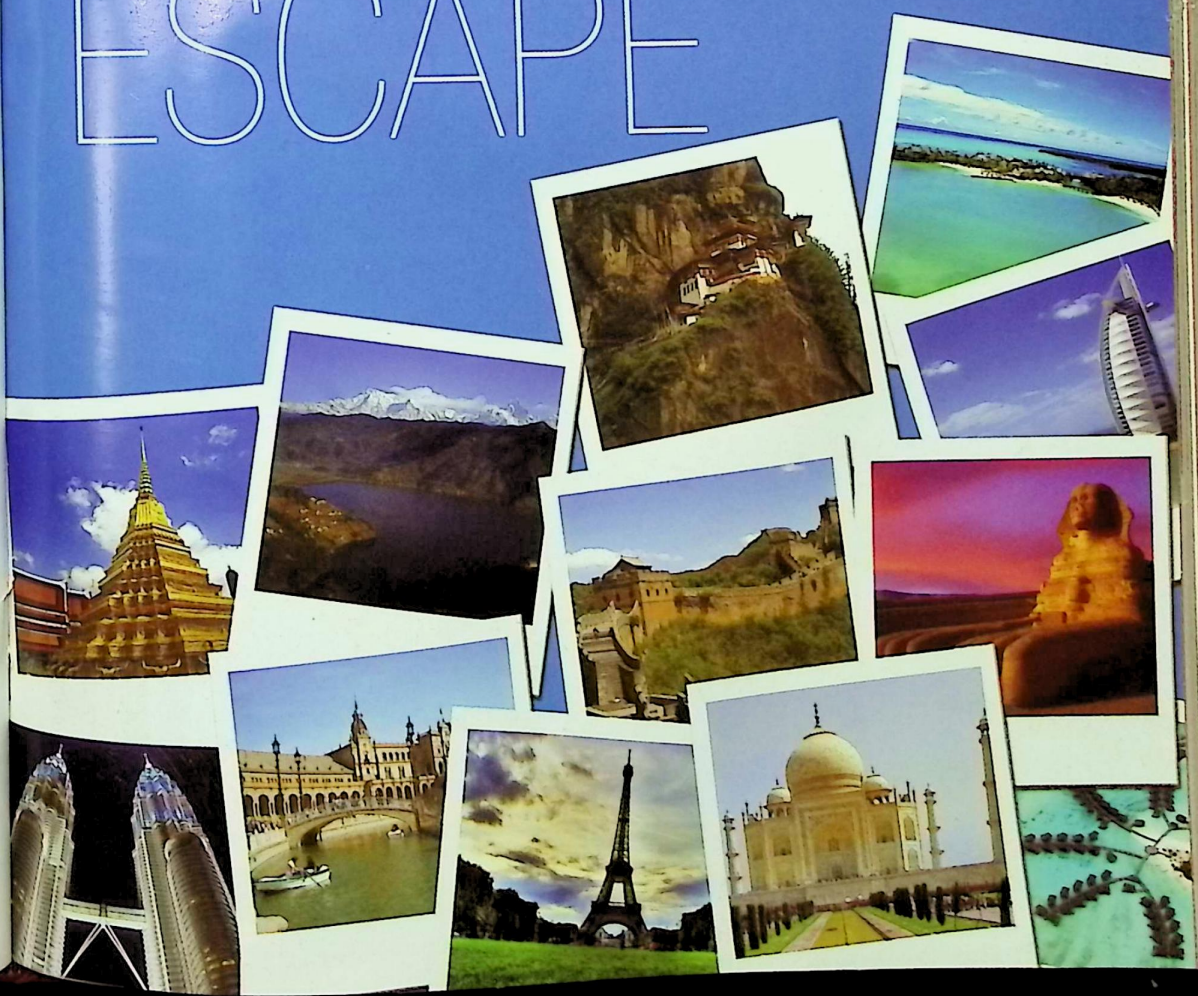
INSIDE

ACHIEVEMENT
Reconstructing Culture

SPECIAL FEATURE
History will Teach us Nothing

HEALTH
7 Signs and Symptoms to Watch Out for

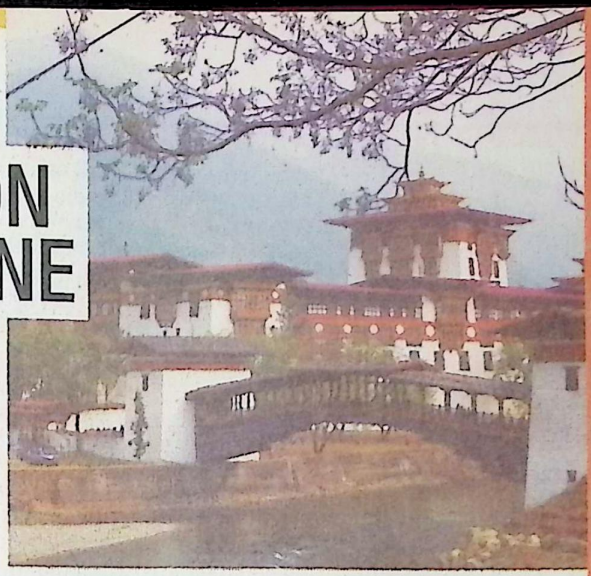
THE GREAT ESCAPE



Cover Story 8-15

LEAVING ON A JET PLANE

The Star magazine brings you the ultimate travel guide! Here, you will find first hand information from seasoned globetrotters, suggestions on what to do before and after you reach your travel destination, and tips on how to survive abroad. Let the journey begin!



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Reasons to say 'Oh what a rotter of a Day!'

inside

20-21 Special Feature

History will Teach Us Nothing



The whole compound of Suhrawardi Uddyan is now occupied by homeless people. They are living in makeshift shanties. It has been alleged that these people are involved in peddling drugs and prostitution.

28-29 Exhibition

A Departure from the Obvious



The September 21-26 photo exhibition at the Liberation War Museum was air-conditioning for the eye, and if you are susceptible to history, the soul. It showcased an unusually interesting mix of photos, giving a sense of what museums and art galleries can do when they depart, even a little, from the usual.

theSTAR

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letters

Forest Fears

Bangladesh needs more power plants to keep up with its demand but I do not understand why it has to be established by destroying the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. It protects our land from coastal disasters and is the only source of livelihood of many of its inhabitants. It saves the lives of thousands people each year from various natural disasters. I hope the government will reconsider the issue and review its decision about the establishment of Rampal coal power plant project.

Bipul K Debnath
Dhaka College, Dhaka

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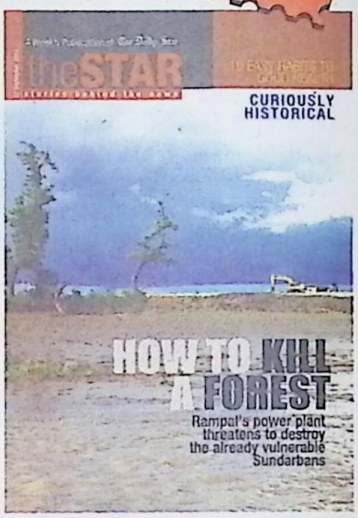
I am disturbed by our government's move to set up the thermal power plant within 14km of the Sundarbans while the Indian government does not allow any power company to set up any coal-fired power plant within 25km of any forest in their territories. Experts are unanimous in their opinion that the government's move will severely harm the Sundarbans destroying its environment, ecosystem and biodiversity. Is the government listening?

Sadananda Vikkhu
Chittagong

Sultan and his Mystery

The story on Sultan reminded me of my days as a child in Jessore when I had the privilege of visiting Sultan at his home in Narail. I was awed to see how he lived---- in a house full of pets including some snakes and paintings all over the places. I did not understand his paintings back then but I could see how different he was from everyone else I had ever met. Back then Sultan was not a household name like he is now. He had to earn international acclaim before his work was appreciated in the country. In my opinion, Sultan's greatness has not yet been realised in our country. He is not only one of Asia's greatest, I believe, he is one of the world's greatest.

Abdul Awal
Narail, essore



Not your fault, but...

A couple of weeks ago a reader wrote a letter terming Chintito's feature the previous week as "this is Chintito at his best". I totally agreed with him at that time. Little did I know that Chintito had something better up his sleeve. He has outdone himself with "Not your fault, but..." Only someone with true wisdom can write something like this.

Akhtaruzzaman Lenin
Baridhara, Dhaka



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views held by *the Star*.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINE:

Letters to the Editor, Star Diary and Write to Mita, with the writer's name and address, should be within 200 words. All articles should be within 1,200 words. A cover letter is not necessary, but every write-up should include the writer's name, phone number and email address (if any). While The Star welcomes unsolicited articles and photographs, it cannot accept the responsibility of their loss or damage. The Star does not return unsolicited articles and photos. Response time for unsolicited write-ups ranges from three weeks to two months. All articles submitted are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

All materials should be sent to: The Star magazine, 64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215, Fax: 880-2-8125155 or emailed to: <thestarmagazine@gmail.com>
It is recommended that those submitting work for the first time to The Star take a look at a sample copy beforehand. Our website is: http://www.thedailystar.net/magazine

Art in Pixels

I have been a fan of Rabi Khan's digital paintings for a while and I was glad to read his profile in the Star. I loved the way the writer wrote this article—her language was simple but powerful. I have seen that Rabi Khan has created two different kinds of paintings throughout his career: abstract art with geometric figures, and colourful images with fluid impressions. And he has done it with computer. It is inspiring to see someone who was once techno phobic achieve such great success in the digital world. We wish him more success in the future.

Tahmina Khatun
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

When Humour Charms . . .

I agree with the writer that humour is indeed liberating. Laughter is one of the first things we do as a newborn, and, if all goes well, it will be one of the last things we do before we die. If we try going through a day without so much as a chuckle, and we will find that it's downright impossible. And those chuckles occur much more frequently than other common emotions like regret, pride, and shame. Humour has many social benefits. Funny people receive positive attention and admiration. According to a study, humour is an excellent way to boost creative prowess. Humour also smoothes potentially awkward social and cultural interactions. Think about how much easier an uncomfortable situation can be when we joke about it. However, while successful humour leads to myriad benefits, failed humour can be downright destructive, from bruised egos and broken friendships to million-dollar marketing mistakes.

Zamaluddin Sarker
Via email.

Democrazy

Last week's feature titled 'Democrazy" caught my attention specifically for its humorous title and cartoon. The writer has done an excellent job of informing us about the true and excruciating state of politics in our country. The totalitarian attitude of the two leading political parties has turned our democracy into 'Democrazy'. Their nagging behaviours push the country toward uncertainty which in turn will cause economic crisis. For the betterment of the nation the two parties should respect the parliament and start practicing true democracy.

Imranur Rashid.
Master Da Surja Sen Hall,
University of Dhaka

Missing Mita

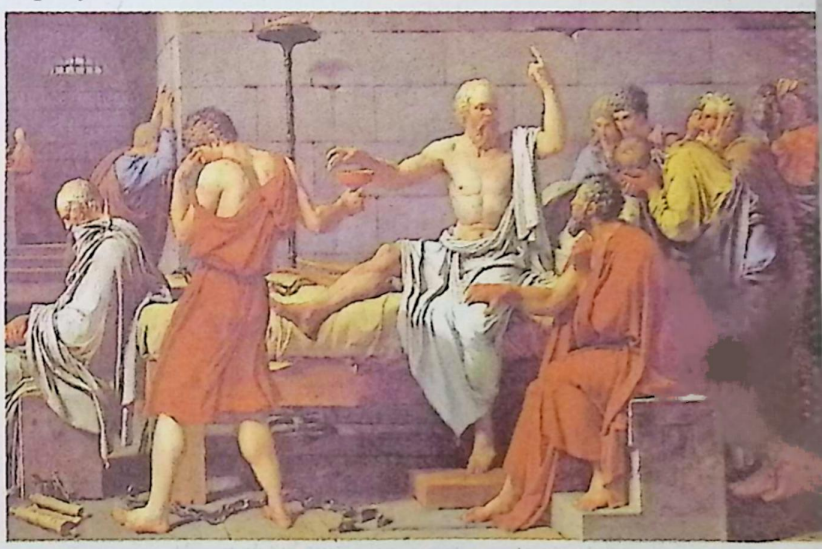
I am an avid reader of the "Write to Mita" column of your esteemed magazine. I love reading the wise advice given by "Mita" to those who seek help. I hope you realise that Mita's advice have touched many lives including mine. A couple of months ago, I wrote about an awkward problem I was facing at my workplace. Mita's suggestion worked like magic. Within a week my problem was solved. For that I am grateful to Mita. However, I do not understand why this popular column is not published on a regular basis. Some weeks you have it, and some weeks you don't. We request the editor of the Star to consider publishing it every week on a regular basis. I can guarantee that it will be highly appreciated by your readers.

Anonymous

ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform all our readers that an individual named SYED OMAR FARUK TOWAHA has been claiming to be the writer behind CHINTITO. He has set up fake profiles on websites such as Linkdin and wikipedia. Please take note that this is NOT Chintito but an impostor. Chintito does not have any profile on Linkdin and he has been writing his column since 1993. The fake Chintito has stated that he was born in 1994 and has been writing since 2008.

The Daily Star considers this a violation of its copyright of the column. It is also a violation of the ICT (Amended) Act 2013. Unless the fake profiles are removed from these websites legal action will be taken against the perpetrator.



Is Truth True?

The writer has made a serious and sincere attempt to address some of the most fundamental questions in life. Philosophy teaches us how to develop an alternative way of looking at things.

Asif Hasan Mehedi
Dhaka University

voicebox



"I like tea and I've no problem about having tea with Khaleda Zia...we've always been flexible time and again for the welfare of the country's people, although the opposition leader, her sons and cabinet members tried to kill me through a grenade attack on August 21, 2004....Is there anyone in Bangladesh who is more flexible than me?"

SHEIKH HASINA
Prime Minister of Bangladesh
At the press conference held at the Bangladesh Permanent Mission in New York.

"We will not join the polls; we will resist it and the polls won't be held."

KHALEDA ZIA
BNP Chairperson
While address a rally at the Khulna Circuit House ground.

"With this verdict, it has been established again that BNP is a party of war criminals."

MAHBUBUL ALAM HANIF
Joint General Secretary of Awami League
In immediate reaction after the verdict of BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

"I don't care for this ... This is not relevant. What is relevant is the interest of the country."

AMA MUHITH
Finance Minister of Bangladesh
In response to protests against Rampal Power Plant.

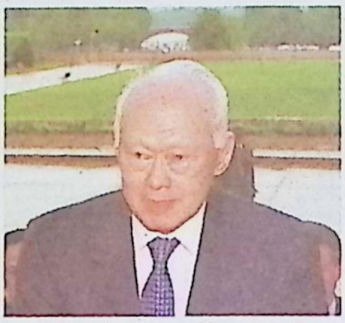
"All of the issues are on the table — territories, security, refugees, Jerusalem. All of the final status issues are on the table."

JOHN KERRY
US Secretary of State
Regarding diplomatic efforts to reach a permanent peace in the peace deal.

"Time is running out, and the window of peace is narrowing and the opportunities are diminishing."

MAHMUD ABBAS
President of Palestine
Warning UN of the last chance for Peace in the Middle East.


aagra
SUPER
SOUND



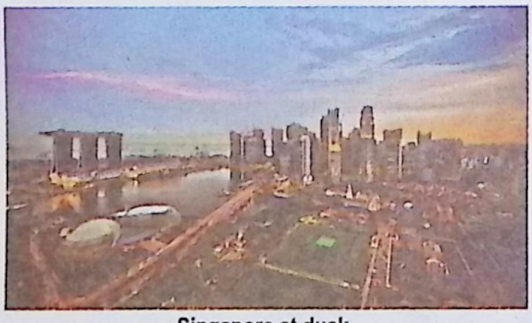
Lee Kuan Yew

Onward Singapore

AHMEDE HUSSAIN

I have a secret to share today. I have fallen in love. Those of you who are smacking their lips with a twinkle in the eyes, hoping to read something saucy in this otherwise drab column, are going to be sorely disappointed. Unlike its more illustrious counterparts, it didn't happen at first sight. To make matters a little more than platonic there have been no candle light dinner, no holding hands on a soft, starry night or kissing at the bend of a dark yet blissful dead end that we at times call life.

It is even difficult for me to tell when and how I fell for Singapore. Was it while going out of Suntec City and forgetting to go straight and taking the Middle Road to get to Bras Basah Road, where I was staying? I turned right on Nicoll Highway and was near Merdeka Bridge. Getting lost is always a little uncomfortable when you are a 20 something, bursting with youthful energy, and the time is one in the morning–you would want to get lost in Clarke Quay, not in a street that refuses to show its tail. You do what I did–find the nearest Singaporean you come across and ask for direction. Singaporeans are the friendliest peoples I have come across in my stay in countries across the globe– after a few gentle taps on the latest iPhone, h/she will tell you with a smile your way home or to Chijmes, a dining and shopping centre in Victoria Street that remains open at this ungodly hour.



Singapore at dusk.

Besides the ever charming Singaporeans– always on the run– you have the MTR and rapid bus transit that snake through the city state. In case you do not like standing in the queue–it is usually never long– you can buy an ezlink card from the nearest 7-Eleven. Public transport is the easiest and fastest way to travel in the country, but you might want to get to the nearest Subway quicker than the bus or the tube, you need to hail a taxi. I love the way the cabbies in S'pore repeat the name of the place you tell them to go–'Simpang Bedok. Ok, you want to go to Si-m-p-a-n-g Be-do-k!' I found it a little weird at first only to realise it later that they do not want to get the names wrong and drop you at the other end of the city.

Simpang Bedok and Pasir Panjang have some of the finest restaurants serving Chilly Crabs, Singapore's unofficial national food. The kopi tiam in front of Woodland station has some of the best arthropods that I have had. In fact, if you are into seafood, there are several other cheap but delicious options at hand: The Banana Leaf Apolo (thebananaleafapolo.com), Razacak's Seafood Kitchen (sbestfood.com/razacksseafoodkitchen), Hj Maimunah (hjmaimunah.com), Qiji (qiji.com.sg) and Old Chang Kee (oldchangkee.com).

Orchard, Singapore's shopping district, is famous across the world for the designer brands, the country also has some of the finest theme parks in the world. Its hospitals are considered second to none in this part of the globe. A cursory glance at the kiosk for tourists at Changi will lead you to a new world of wonder.

The way to a man's heart might lie through his stomach, but at the end of the day what matters to you the most if you want to live in a country is the aura that it gives you. In Singapore you will feel safe all the time. If any country in the Northern Hemisphere can boast of enforcing the principles of equality and rule of law with an iron fist, Singapore it has to be. Lee Kuan Yew, the island state's founding father, and the pioneers have made a lot of sacrifice to build the Singapore we so love and admire today. It is indeed a lesson to the world, a lesson in hard work and perseverance. Singapore remains to us a beckon of hope, a shining example of peace, prosperity and happiness.

On a less serious note, not falling in love with Singapore is impossible. And unlike other love stories that you have read, I don't mind sharing my love with you. It's worth ending with a few lines from 'Ulysses by the Merlion' by Edwin Thumboo that aptly describes the spirit of love and togetherness that we call Singapore:

Peoples settled here,
Brought to this island
The bounty of these seas,
Built towers topless as Ilium's.
They make, they serve,
They buy, they sell.

twitter: @ahmedehussain

Will the Fake Chintito Sit Down?

CHINTITO

When we started this Chintito column on our newspaper broadsheet from our Dhanmandi Road 3 office in May 1993, our humble vision was to inspire our youth with the spirit of Muktijuddho (mind you, the early youth readers are today 40 years +), encourage a nation to courageously battle corruption in all spheres, mock at our follies so that we may be enlightened, and to inculcate values of life based on religion, social customs and human virtues.

It was beyond our comprehension then that not so much our column but the name Chintito would catch the imagination of some people so much so that they would be adopting the same as a prefix or prefix to their name, or as whole as their blog, twitter, and Facebook identity.

Among others we have found in our limited search Chintito Kobi, Moha Chintito, Chintito Jeebon, Chintito Torun, Chintito Mon, Chintay Chintito, Chintito Teen, and so on. While we have no copyright on the name Chintito, we are flattered that the Bangalee nation feels worried by the happenings in their society, country and the world. We obviously take some gratification that our column begun two decades ago paved the way for the birth of so many thinkers. And don't we need them!

The worry for us is however the total lack of originality in the thinking among many of us, even in matters as small as naming oneself. Why copy a name? The parents of a newborn would be shamed beyond measure if the name of their child remotely matched that of their neighbour or someone in their fourteen generations. And so we have an array of names today that make merry any assembly of family and friends. That pride is not witnessed among these thinkers named 'x-Chintito' or 'Chintito-x', or with greater recklessness simply 'Chintito'.

What worries us even more is that a few bloggers and individuals have taken the liberty, illegal as it is, to claim themselves as Chintito of *the Star* magazine. There has never been a greater misrepresentation of the truth, and perhaps the claim can be established as Cyber crime, seeing that a LinkedIn profile has also been posted under a fake Chintito.

There are various veins of concern regarding faking of a character, one of them being the blame of any crime or misdemeanour committed by the fake 'Chintito' being appended to our columnist. That would be quite a problem for those who are acquainted with our person at The Daily Star Bhaban.

Just imagine a lady coming to the Bhaban and demanding vigorously to meet the Editor because she thinks that Chintito pinched her bottom. But the pincher in actuality was the faker.

It could be the other way round too. A male victim of a fake she-Chintito could come barging into our office and claim compensation for being robbed of all his 'possessions' during his moment (okay half hour) of weakness.

After 20 long years, several governments, and the passing of a whole generation, perhaps it is now time to reveal the real Chintito to put an end to the anonymity, not for any particular reason but to stop the buccaneering of another's identity, and to save oneself from any serious cyber crime.

Through this column I would like to run a poll on how many of our readers would like for the real Chintito to reveal him or herself before the world. That would give you an opportunity to express your opinion, and some of you may like to hold on to your imagination of the person. But the fact is I too am tired of my mask and it is getting sticky after years of wear and tear.

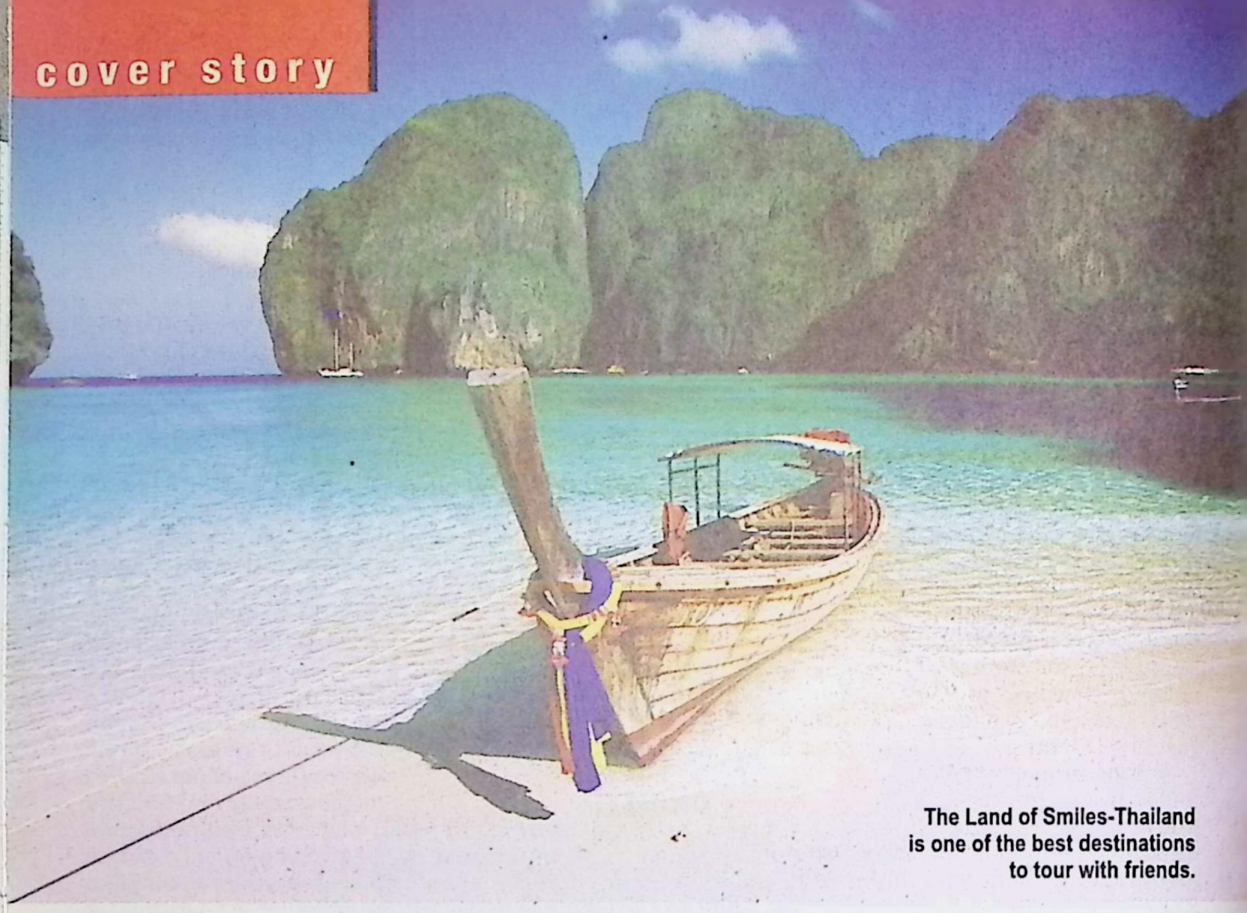
A freedom-fighter who found out my identity said to an audience that he and his late brother used to discuss about the probable home district of Chintito. While his brother opined Chintito was from Barisal, the freedom-fighter argued that the columnist must be from Noakhali. Then there could be some of you who differed and believed from the writing that the author was from Mymensingh or Rangpur.

We have had letters claiming that Chintito was a woman. And of course some of you think that he is from the male species. I would be very upset personally if any of you thought in between, although there is no blame if one is naturally born that way.

In a blog there was a claim that Chintito was a middle-aged person. My objection would depend upon whether the blogger assumed middle age was something to be ashamed of. Not really. I have seen 20-year olds behaving like they were touching sixty; and octogenarians acting like teenagers. I am in favour of the latter.

So I could be from any district in Bangladesh, all of them are so very beautiful in their own way. I could be either a male or a female, but definitely not a male behaving like a sissy, neither a woman acting manly. I am perhaps aged around dignified eighty with the mindset of sweet sixteen.

Yes! all could be revealed on my 21st birthday! ■



The Land of Smiles-Thailand is one of the best destinations to tour with friends.

LEAVING ON A JET PLANE

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA and UPASHANA SALAM

It's time. You're ready to say goodbye. It's adios to the unrelenting traffic. You won't be seeing the stacks of paperwork. Early mornings and you are so done. At least for those few magical days of vacation.

Staying at one place for a long time can be dangerous to your physical and mental state. Your responsibilities start dictating your life. You can feel your eyes resisting the sights and scenes that greet you day in and day out. You might just be reaching the frayed ends of your sanity. Getting out of the country for some days might just be what the doctor prescribed. The Star Magazine brings you the ultimate travel guide! Here, you will find first hand information from seasoned globe-trotters, suggestions on what to do before and after you reach your travel destination, and tips on how to survive abroad. Let the journey begin!

Going Solo

Travelling alone can be fun and self-indulging, as it gives travellers the chance to meet new people and culture. It also gives people a feeling of freedom, to do as one likes without having to adjust to other people's likes and dislikes. Travelling alone, however, has its own risks and some research and common sense can save you from getting swindled!

"Background research is an integral part of my trip. I'm very detail oriented and I always research a place before going there. I get most of my information from sites like Tripadvisor and LonelyPlanet. I also visit several travel blogs for more detailed information," says Monzur Morshed, Business Development Manager of Noman Group who has bagged a lot of experiences as a solo traveler.

"love to travel alone most of the time. It's not like I don't like hanging out with friends. But travelling alone means I get to meet new people and can acquaint myself with different cultures," says Zia Islam, a young photographer. "I travel to photograph, when I am alone, and I can plan my tour the way I want. When I roam around I can look at things with more time and attention. When I am not photographing, I find myself sitting with a chatty gang and exchanging information about our respective cultures," he adds.



Turkey has become a recent favourite among Bangladeshis for its rich historical monuments.

So, where can we travel if we are all on our own? "For lone travellers, who are on a tight budget and travelling for the first time, you can always choose more familiar locales like India, Nepal, Bhutan or Thailand. You can find fellow expatriates and travellers who speak your native tongue or find other tourist groups to tag along," Zia opines.

"Traveling solo in countries like Nepal or India is very common. However, at the end of the day no one is left alone, and in a couple days our solo travellers find themselves touring in a big group of people coming from diverse cultures who have similar interests," says tour manager Jahangir Alam.

Europe also offers a lot to explore. "If you can spend a bit more, solo travellers could tour Europe, which is very accessible for them. It'll be very easy to meet people in the lounges from different countries in affordable hostels, and so you'll never feel alone", says Monzur.

If you want to give adventurous trips a shot you can always find like-minded company by joining



Before the Trip

If you don't have any prior idea about the place that you want to visit, you might end up having a terrible time. A well-detailed itinerary listing the places you want to visit will help you be better prepared and more in charge of your vacation. Here's some other tips that you need to consider before planning a trip abroad.

1. Get to know of your visa details well in advance of your trip. You don't want to book the hotel rooms and tickets before you find out that your visa has not even been processed.
2. Do a web research on your destination to find out places of interest and warnings about localities that should be given a miss. Travel blogs and sites like TripAdvisor, Agoda and Make My Trip are ideal to gather information about the country you wish to visit.
3. Get a guidebook, as guidebooks usually include maps, key phrases ad words and will give you enough information about landmarks and popular sites.
4. Take a charger adapter. Different countries use different size plugs and voltage. If you wish to use your electronics, make sure that you can take a adapter with you so you can charge them.
5. Pack an extra set of clothes in your carry-on bag. In case, you lose your luggage on the way, at least you won't be stranded in one pair of clothes for the first few days of your vacation.
6. If you are travelling by air, find out how many bags you are allowed to check-in before you travel. You don't want to end up in the airport with a number of bags only to find out that you can take only two of them.
7. Look up the monetary conversion before you go. You can't go expecting a certain value and find out that in reality you end with something much less insignificant on landing.
8. Inform your bank or credit card provider if you wish to use your card in a foreign land. Your bank might think that there is some fraud going on if transactions are suddenly happening in Thailand when you are from Dhaka.

different groups consisting of solo travellers like you. Joining a small group can let you have new friends, ensure safety and also help you in cutting costs by sharing expenditure. At the same time, remember there are always con artists out there and solo travellers are more prone to getting conned! Hang out, smile, share but always keep your guard up and make sure that you don't trust strangers with your life.

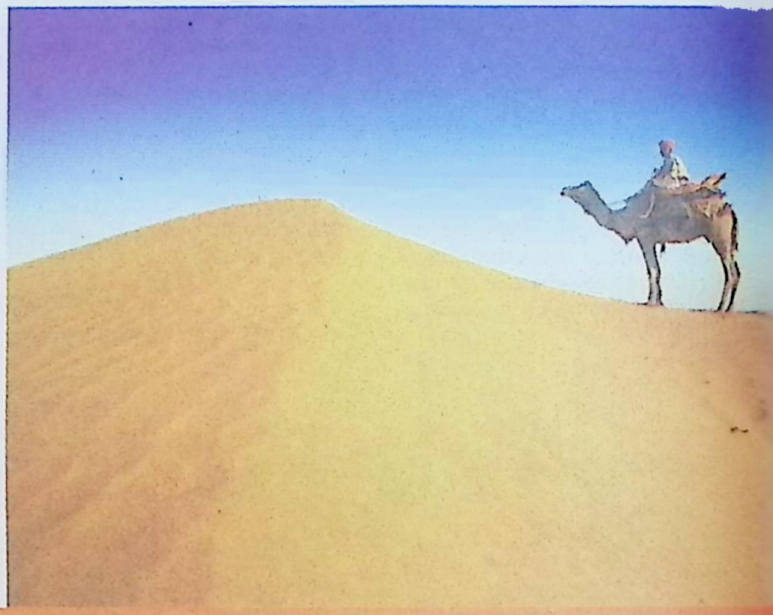
"Scammers are everywhere in the world. My advice would be to use your common sense. If someone offers a deal that seems too good to be true, it probably is," Monzur says.

For lone travellers, Zahangir has three tips. Firstly, pack light. Secondly, always carry your identification card, a copy of your passport and a map. Finally, learn some common local language words and phrases.

In countries where travellers go with extended groups or their family, a solo traveller might get strange and sympathetic glances. Don't be perturbed by this and just enjoy your free-agent status.

Friends Go Round

If you are a student and want to go on a fun trip with your friends inspired by road trip movies, choosing the right destination is crucial for you. "We had our meagre savings, and our family had to sponsor the rest. So, India was our first choice. I had to convince my parents why this trip was very important to and what greater knowledge I might



India's diversity in culture makes it a travellers' haven.

What, Where and How

To make things easier for you, *the Star* Magazine offers hotel suggestions, places you can visit and visa costs of some of the popular holiday destinations.

Shoppers' Paradise

Kolkata is the place to go if you are looking for cheap bargains and a trip down memory lane. Look for hotels in the Park Street or New Market vicinity as those are the shopping and entertainment hubs of the city

Visa Cost to India: BDT 400
Hotels:
Budget: Hotel Victerrace
Where: Park Street and Vicinity
Price: starting from $25 per night for 2 people

Mid Range: Hotel Lee International
Where: Park Street and Vicinity
Price: starting from $35 per night for 2 people

High End: Kenilworth Hotel
Where: Park Street
Price: starting from $76 per night for 2 people

Thailand is the postcard destination. You can go there with your family, you can go there on your honeymoon, you can go there only for shopping. If you want a holistic experience at affordable rates not too far away from home, Thailand would suit just fine!

Visa Cost to Thailand: BDT 3400
Hotels:
Budget: 13 Coins Antique Villa
Where: 304 Surawongse Road Bangrak,Bangkok,10500
Price: $28 per night for two people

Mid Level: Silom City Hotel
Where: 72Soj Prachum, Silom Road, Bangkok
Price: starting from $37 per night for two

High Range: Grande Centre Point Ratchadamri Hotel
Where: 153/2 Soi Mahatiek Luang 1 Ratchadamri Road, Lumpini, Bangkok
Price: starting from $150 per night for two

Couples Retreat

The romantic capital of the world Paris is the way to go if you are one to go for grand gestures. What can be a more romantic getaway than glancing up the Eiffel Tower with your partner?

Visa Cost to France: BDT 10,000
Hotels:
Budget: Port Royal Hotel
Where: 8 Boulevard, Port Royal, 5th
Price: $94 for two

Mid Range: Hôtel de la Herse d'Or
Where: 20 rue Saint-Antoine, 4th
Price: $128 for two

High End: Terrass Hotel
Where: 12-14 Rue Joseph de Maistre
Price: $218 per night for two

miss acquiring if I miss the trip," laughs Nishat Islam a BBA student in North South University. Picking a locale that is relatively close to Bangladesh will allow you to have a fun trip at a minimum budget. India's diversity in culture, landscapes, historical places and ancient structures will allow you and your friends to choose from a list of options.

No Boundaries

There are a number of countries that can be entered with out a visa using your Bangladesh passport. We present to you a small list of such countries where you can avail visa(s) on arrival.

Visa On Arrival

- Bhutan No visa required
- Laos
- Macau
- Maldives
- Nepal
- Sri Lanka
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- British Virgin Islands
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Fiji

If you belong to a troop who are adventure enthusiasts and look forward to going to long mountain expeditions and indulging in daring adventure sports, Nepal is the right choice for you. You can have a low to medium budget to enjoy the scenic beauty, scrumptious food and trekking as a group.

Masudul Amin Rintu, General Manager of Robi Axiata Limited, identifies The Land of Smiles-Thailand as one of the best destinations to tour with friends. He explains, "Thailand offers a cluster of fun and affordable wonderments that will engage and entertain big groups of travelers."

It is very important to remember that traveling with a group needs finesse and consideration for others needs. Picking the right group is no less important than picking the right destination. If you don't want to be the spoil-sport of your trip, travel with people who you think will be compatible with your expectations and interests. Also while planning for a tour and planning the budget, it is important to respect everyone's interest when it comes to accommodation, food and transport. A mutually agreed upon travel plan will always save yours on disagreements and squabbles. Touring in a larger group does not necessarily mean you have to stick to it all the time. Splitting up for a shorter period of time can be considered as a good idea if your interests don't match all the time. Above all, don't expect everything to happen the way you want!

For those wanting a more accessible, affordable option, you could look at **Malaysia**. Be it the culture, the food, the people; Malaysia truly offers the best in terms of adventure and romance.

Visa Cost to Malaysia: BDT 600
Hotels:
Budget: Best Stay Hotel
Where: 55, Jalan Pasir Bogak Perak
Price: starts from $29 per night for two

Mid Level: M-Suites Hotel
Where: 16 Jalan Skudai, Straits View
Price: starting from $48 per night for two

High End: Prince Hotel and Residence
Where: Jalan Konlay, Kuala Lampur
Price: starting from $115 per night for two

For Adventure Freaks

Nepal is ideal for those who want to appreciate nature and also want to go on a trekking expedition with friends. Bungee jumping, river rafting, mountain climbing; Nepal has all this and more.

Visa Cost to Nepal: Visa on Arrival
Hotels:
Budget: Hotel Garuda
Where: Thamel, Kathmandu, PO Box 1771
Price: $30

Mid Level: Hotel Northfield
Where: Thamel, Kathmandu, PO Box 1764
Price: $59

High End: Hotel Shanker
Where: Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Price: from $138 per night for two

Going in Groups

Indonesia is the perfect place to go to if you go with your family or with friends. Its tranquil beauty and indigenous culture makes this country a must-see for all seasons.

Visa Cost to Indonesia: BDT 3800
Hotels:
Budget: The 101 Bali Legian
Where: Jalan Raya Legian No. 117, Legian
Price: $ 32.50

Mid Range: Club Bali Suites @ Jakarta Bali Hotel
Where : 526 Werkudara StreetLegian-Kuta
Price: $63.02

High End: The Royal Beach Seminyak Bali
Where Jalan Camplung Tanduk Seminyak
Price: $199.80

If you want to take kids along with you then **Singapore** should do the trick. There are a number of amusement parks, restaurants and other entertaining options to keep the little ones distracted while you tour and shop.

Visa Cost to Singapore: BDT 2600
Hotels:
Budget: Broadway Hotel Singapore
Where: Little India
Price: $ 70.50

Mid End: Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre
Where: Orchard Road
Price: $210.02

High End: Mandarin Orchard Singapore
Where: Orchard Road
Price: $ 270.10



Kidding Yourself

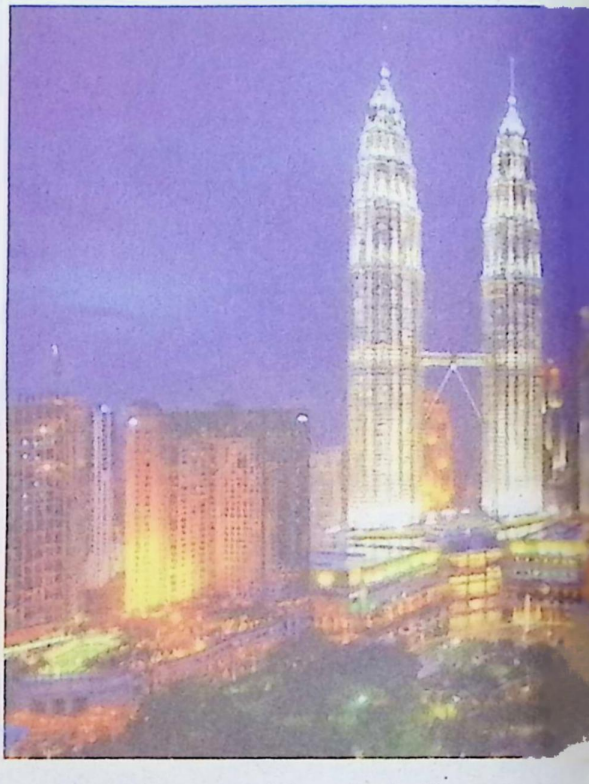
Travelling with children can be quite nerve-wrecking. You have to cater to their needs, make sure that they are pacified and are not creating too much of a ruckus and spend hours being concerned about their safety. However, with a bit of know-how, travelling with kids can be hassle-free and frankly, quite enjoyable.

1. If your children are getting out the country for the first time, make sure that they get their vaccinations, so that they are well protected against common diseases.
2. Explain airport safety and security procedures and rules to your kids beforehand and instruct them to cooperate with airport security officials to avoid hassle.
3. Always book ahead. Be it hotel bookings or airline, train or bus reservations, make sure that you are well prepared in advance.
4. Take extra time when visiting different places. Children love to explore and might lose their cool if you hurry them every time they just start having fun.
5. Give them a camera. You could hand a one-time use camera to your child to ensure that he/she is preoccupied and actually enjoy the novelty of new surroundings.
6. Hand sanitizers and antibacterial wipes are a must if you want to keep germs at bay.
7. Consult with a pediatrician before travelling, and remember to carry medicines that will keep away common diseases.
8. You could let your children pack their bags but make sure that you take a good look at what they are planning to take with them. A lot of time children pack completely unnecessary things in their luggage and then complain of it being too heavy.
9. Make a list of activities that will keep them engaged. Fun family games, colouring books, puzzles and small toys could distract them from the monotony of the journey and help them pass the time.
10. If you are travelling through crowded areas, write the address and phone number of your hotel in your child's arm in case they get lost. Explain to them how and why this detail might be important.
11. Engage and involve older kids into the planning process. Ask them for input on where they'd like to go or if the destination is fixed, ask them what they'd like to do there.

Couples' Delight

Luxurious villas, extravagant meals, gleaming sands, pearly white beaches, romantic mountains. What do you look for in a romantic getaway, far from the maddening crowd and countless responsibilities? If you want to spend a serene holiday far from the hustle-bustle of daily life, in an idyllic spot, Malaysia, Indonesia, Spain or the Maldives are the perfect picks for you.

Masudul Amin, has spent holidays with his wife in a couple of countries. "Malaysia has always been a favourite," says Masudul. "Its peaceful nature, serene beaches, affordability, Halal food



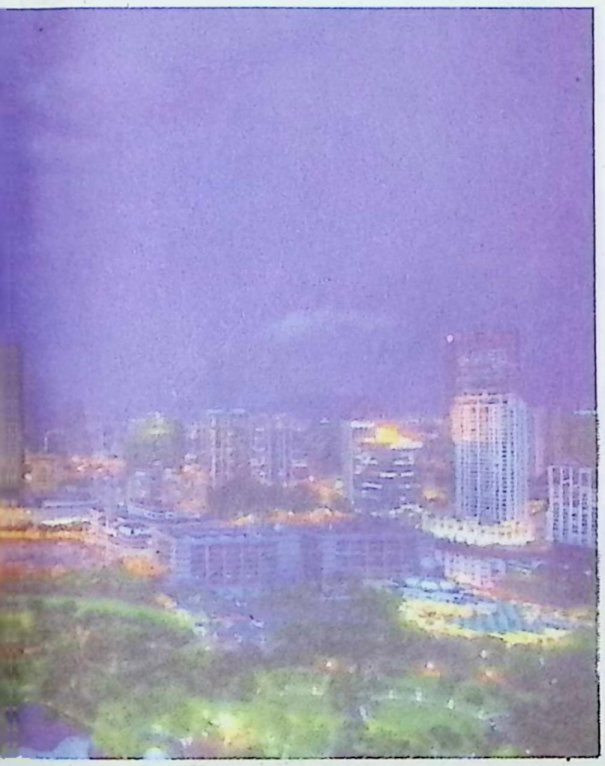
provision, wide range of shopping facility, and an overall gentle atmosphere, have made the country a genteel haven for couples of all ages."

You can always pick India, Nepal or the Himalayan kingdom Bhutan if you want to go to a country nearby. "The last Shangri La in Bhutan is the most romantic destination," croons Samira Alam who went her honeymoon there two years back. "We have been to other places in the last two years. But Bhutan's pristine beauty and happy people make it unbeatable."

The couples who are not on a budget and don't mind spending a bit more could consider going to Paris, the romance capital of the world. "Apart from France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland are ideal of lovers visiting Europe," says S M Mazharul Islam, Brand manager of Wings Classic Tours and Travels Limited.

Family Time

Where do we prefer to go on a family vacation? Well, the answer depends on a number of variables: time, money and our own preference! There are plenty of amusement items like theme parks, sanctuaries, water sports, museum, and historical palaces in Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore to keep the whole family entertained. If you plan your vacation during your children's long summer vacation, and if your budget allows, plan for a long vacation outside of Asia. Europe can make for an amazing family trip for its Eclectic range of natural beauties and towering historical structures.



Malaysia has always been a favourite destination for Bangladeshi travellers.

Mashi ud Duza, Head of Health and Safety, Lafarge Surma Cement Limited, often goes on world tours with his family. He and his family have visited countries like Singapore, UK, Canada, France, Germany; the list goes on! He considers three issues when planning a trip abroad. Firstly, being an executive of a multinational company, he has colleagues in different countries. "I find it very convenient if I have friends and colleagues living in the country we plan to visit, as they help me plan the trip and choose places to visit," he explains. Secondly, if he goes on an official tour in a country for more than two days, he decides to take his family along with him and extends the trip to more days. "Once I am done with my official work, I can

Safety First

Tourists always make easy targets for muggers and thieves, as they stand out in a crowd and appear unused to their surroundings. A few simple precautions will ensure that your risk of being robbed is significantly reduced.

Safety on the Way

1. Watch your bags and valuables at all times.
2. Don't let anyone but uniformed airline officials handle your bags.
3. Don't fall for staged mishaps, like someone bumping into you or spilling a drink on you. This could be a ploy to divert your attention and steal your valuables.
4. Keep anything of value in a bag that stays with you at all times.
5. Watch for your suitcase as it appears on the airport carousel. You don't want to linger around for too long before noticing that someone else is walking away with your luggage.
6. Avoid changing money at airports or train stations at all cost. You never know who's watching.

Travel Safety

1. Don't let all and sundry know about your travel plans. That's a surefire way of inviting trouble.
2. Ask your hotel manager for advice on safe and unsafe local areas. Try to avoid the seedier localities, particularly at night. As a rule of thumb, areas that include more women and children tend to be safer for families.
3. Always carry with you the contact details of the Bangladeshi embassy of the country you plan to visit.
4. Keep a photocopy of your passport and all important documents in a safe place.
5. Don't stand out in a crowd. Walk like you know where you are going even if you don't have the slightest idea.
6. Avoid wearing touristy clothes that scream that you are not from there.
7. Don't make yourself an attractive target while travelling. Avoid wearing expensive jewelry or accessories.
8. Don't let strangers be over-friendly with you. You never know where their intentions lie.
9. Don't keep your wallet in your back pocket. To avoid being robbed, keep your wallet in your front pocket that can be buttoned up.
10. Don't leave your belongings unattended in public places. Keeping your bag hanging from chairs or at your feet is a bad, bad idea. Always keep your bag on your lap or at a place where you can keep an eye on it.
11. If you are mugged, let your valuables go. Your life is more important than the money. However, be careful about not carrying all your money in your wallet.



spend time with my family," says Mashi ud Duza. Thirdly, he chooses the countries where he has got some close relatives whom he can meet during his vacation.

Tabrez Bin Mahbub, Director of Local Corportaes, Standard Chartered Bank, prefers Thailand and Malaysia when he goes on a family vacation. "These two countries make me feel at home; I don't feel out of the circle. Also, when you are with your family, shopping is a must on the itinerary! Thailand and Malaysia offers a lot in terms of shopping," Tabrez says.

Ideally, you should pack light to have a hassle-free travel. But when you are with your family and if you have children, this rule of thumb might not work every time. Tabrez continues, "If your kids are big enough to carry a small backpack or any baggage you should make them do that, no matter how small and light the bag is. It will make them feel important and will develop a sense of responsibility in them."

While traveling with your family, supervising your children in a proper way is very important. Being a frequent traveller, Mashi ud Duza has developed his own strategy, "I prefer giving my children safety travel tags with information including their name, their parents' name, emergency contact numbers, flight details, name of their home country and any other important information related to our travel. This small step can save travellers like us from getting into trouble."



Bhutan's pristine beauty and happy people make it a desirable trave destination.

Agent Speak

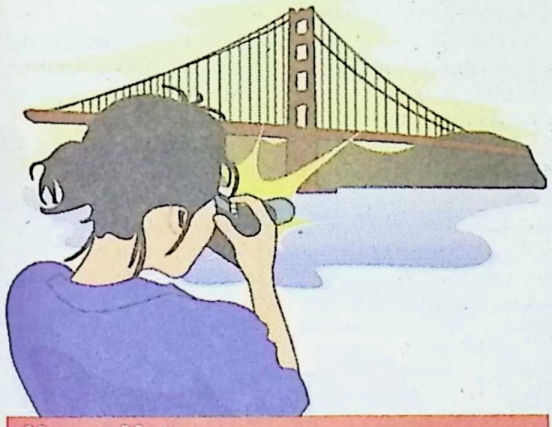
In terms of the most preferred and in demand holiday destinations. Bangladeshi tourists prefer to visit India, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bhutan most, says S M Mazharul Islam, the brand manager of a travel agency. "People also love traveling to Singapore Indonesia and the Maldives during their holidays," he says.

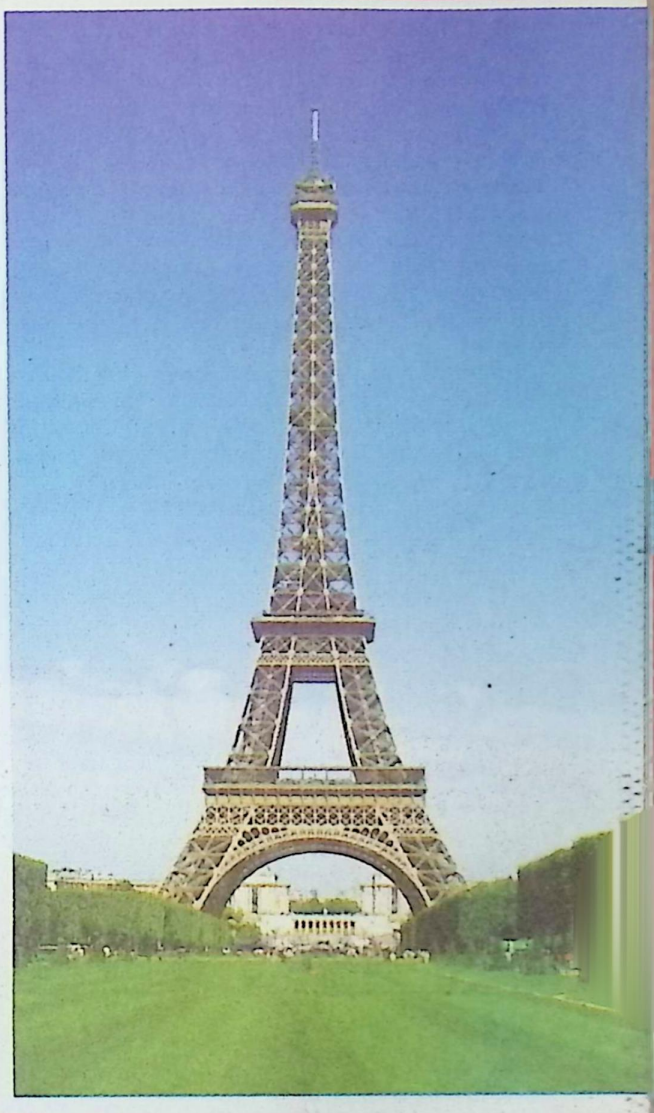
For those who have a fairly large travel budget a European trip has become quite the craze says Islam. "A Euro tour is relatively more expensive, and people prefer staying there for a longer period

of time. Nowadays, people travel to France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland," Mazhar explains.

"Egypt was formerly a popular holiday destination but due to its current political turmoil, the country is losing its appeal for travellers," Mazhar says. Dubai attracts a large number of travellers every year who visit the country for relaxing and shopping purposes, even though the trip is relatively expensive.

"Turkey has become a recent favorite amidst Bangladeshis for its rich historical monuments and also for having a number of cheap direct flights from Dhaka to Istanbul," concludes Mazhar.





Money Matters

Imagine, you only carry cash to your travel destination. You get mugged, and all your money is lost. Or worse, the international ATM card that you were carrying gets eaten by the machine, and you are left stranded. You always need to be careful about money matters when you are in an unfamiliar place. Here are some tips to ensure that the money keeps flowing and the good times keep rolling.

1. Always carry only small cash in your wallet. You could keep the rest of your money in a ziplock bag tucked into the lining of your suitcase to avoid prying eyes and wandering hands
2. Keep alternatives. Carry an international credit or debit card with you to ensure that you are not wholly dependent on cash.
3. Make sure your card is accepted in the country you plan to visit.
4. Use ATM booths during the day when there are people around, as there will lesser chance of being mugged.
5. Traveller's cheques are no longer as widely accepted as they used to be, as changing cheques can often involve dealing with hours of bureaucracy. So, it's best to chuck the cheques and carry cards and cash with you.
6. For those countries where cash is the only option, you should carry only as much as you need for the day, and keep the rest in a safe place in your suitcase. Carry a currency, such as dollars or euros, that you can change anywhere.
7. If you have valuables in the suitcase, keep it locked when going out. Using the hotel safe to lock up your valuables is another option.
8. While planning your trip, be sure to trim your wallet. Take the time go through your wallet and take out everything except the necessities such as your credit and debit cards, an ID card and cash.

Bye Bye BD

There's nothing more refreshing than getting out of the country for a while. When you feel like you just aren't being able to continue, a break from all of it is sure to do you good. You don't want to remain stagnant at one spot all your life without giving yourself the chance to explore the world, do you? Give yourself a break, pack those bags and start with the exploring, already! Bon Voyage!

When he was a judge of the High Court Division, Justice ABM Khairul Haque in a verdict on contempt of court ordinance in 2008 said the power to punish anybody for contempt of court was created to ensure litigants the benefit of verdicts for the sake of fair justice. The power was not created for the personal purpose of judges.

Justice Haque, who was later appointed as the chief justice of the Supreme Court, in his 2008 verdict that scrapped the contempt of court ordinance, described briefly the history of the contempt of court.

Undermining the King's order was considered a grave offence in ancient times. Since then people who defied the King's orders were tried summarily and put behind bars. During the regime of King Henry III [1216-1272] judges imposed fines on employees of courts and others for their activities beyond the court's orders.

CONTEMPT

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The King of England was considered the fountain of justice and he had inherent power of holding any sort of trials. When the King sat to hold trial, it was known as King's Bench. He was the owner of all the supreme power. And he was also above the law literally.

No one dared to defy any order or verdict delivered by the King since such an act was considered as a grave offence and for which death penalty was the only punishment.

Later, judges empowered by the power of the King carried out judicial proceedings and their supremacy was like the King of England. They were also empowered with the inherent power of the King to hold trials.

During the British colonial regime in the Indian sub-continent, the Supreme Court was set up in Fort William in 1774 with the same and all powers including the contempt of court power of the King Bench.

Following a series of developments, the British regime enacted the contempt of court act in 1926.

In view of Professor Shah Alam, who teaches law at the University of Chittagong and now a member of Bangladesh Law Commission, the motive behind the contempt of court act made by British colonial rulers in 1926 was to gag all sort of criticism against judiciary in the Indian sub-continent.

They were in favour of the judiciary not for the sake of independence of judiciary. They rather used to abuse the judiciary against people of this sub-continent to rule them. But people and media could not criticise the judiciary's role due to the contempt of court law.

"That was an abnormal law. It did not have any definition of contempt. But the law had lasted for around a century as all the successive ruling classes accepted it," sates Prof Shah Alam.

Professor Sarkar Ali Akkas, dean of law faculty of Jagannath University, says the law of contempt of 1926 curbed the role of media in scrutinising judges. That was an insufficient law. The principles of contempt of court were not specifically provided by that law. There was no definition of contempt of court.

Therefore, contempt of court was a barrier to the role of the media in scrutinising judges, although, freedom of the press is an important fundamental right in Bangladesh. Since the law of contempt of court itself was uncertain, freedom of the press was always at risk, he states.

Around a decade ago, Prof Akkas in his book styled 'Independence and Accountability of Judiciary: A critical review' described in detail the situation.

"For the sake of ensuring the public accountability of judges, the law of contempt of court should be changed providing detailed principles including a clear definition of contempt of court," he wrote in his book.

The past caretaker government led by Fakhruddin Ahmed moved to make a new law of contempt. To make the law, then president promulgated an ordinance in 2008. But a High Court Division bench consisting of Justice Khairul Haque and Justice Abul Tarique declared the ordinance unconstitutional and void.

Later, the present Awami League-led government again moved to enact a new law on the contempt of court and placed a bill in parliament on June 14, 2011. The parliament repealed the Brit-

ish- colonial regime's law of contempt and passed the bill to enact a new law of contempt on February 19 this year.

The new law defines two types of contempt of court – civil and criminal. The law was considered a strong step to strengthen people's right to freedom of speech and the freedom of press as it did not consider as contemptuous the publishing of impartial and objective reports on judicial proceedings and making objective and unbiased comments on the merits of a case after its final disposal.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

In absence of any such specific protection, media and people in general had been finding it difficult to write even objective reports or make comments on judicial proceedings, fearing action under the contempt law of 1926.

In defence of the enacting the new law, a parliamentary sub-committee formed by the parliamentary standing committee on the law justice and parliamentary affairs ministry in a report said in absence of any definition in Contempt of Court Act, 1926 judges on many occasions, have drawn contempt proceedings against the judges of lower courts, civil servants and journalists which have no relevance either violation of the court's order or disrespect to it but related with personal affairs arising out of their personal entitlement of accommodation, passing of the bills by the audit department and using some other public facilities.

"But the fact remains that issues which have no relevance with the court proceeding and relates to personal affairs of a judge shall not be dealt with within the scope of power of contempt as it hinders to put in place transparency and accountability," observed the parliamentary sub-committee in its report prepared in mid of 2012 after reviewing the then proposed bill on the contempt of court.

But the new law lasted only for a few months. The High Court on September 26 declared the law illegal and unconstitutional. Alongside giving some protection to the media, the law had also provided the government officials with some protection against the court of contempt charges. The High Court said both the provisions were discriminatory and against the constitution.

Interestingly, identical media-friendly provisions exist in the contempt of court law in India, the largest democratic country in the world with a vibrant judiciary. Passed in 1971, the law says fair and accurate reporting of judicial proceedings and fair criticism of judicial functions will not be considered as contempt of court.

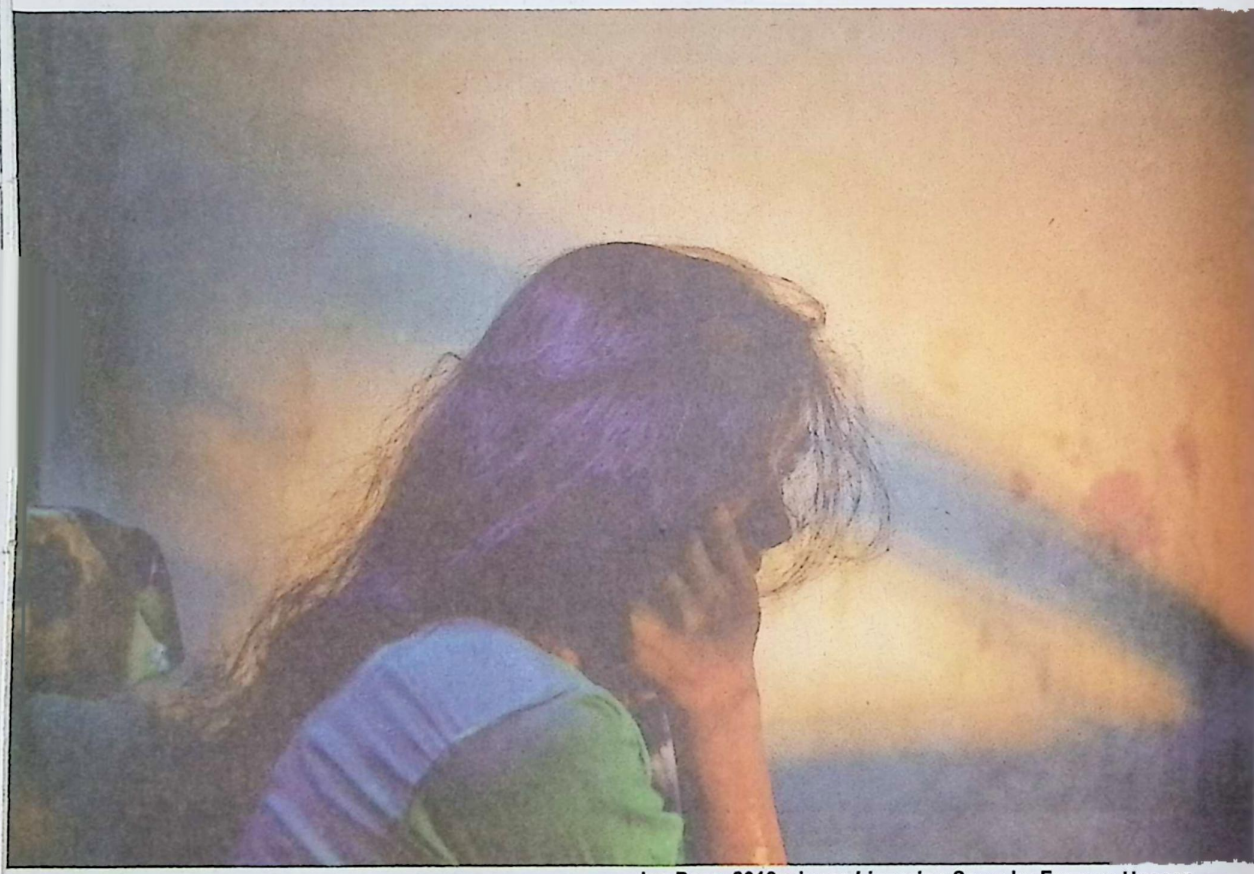
India did not attempt to protect the government officials the way Bangladesh has.

In view of some legal experts and academics, the High Court should not have declared illegal the provision on the freedom of speech and freedom of press. They supported the court's ruling against the provision that had tried to protect the government officials in unjustified way.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will now decide the fate of the High Court verdict and the fate of the contempt of court law as well.

The constitution is the source of power of the court. And the constitution as the solemn expression of the will of the people emphatically states all powers in the Republic belongs to the people. So, people's freedom of speech should not be limited in any unjustified way. Democracy cannot flourish by stifling freedom of speech and the freedom of press.

The writer is Senior Reporter, The Daily Star.



Ian Parry 2013 winner *Lingering Scars* by Farzana Hossen.

RECONSTRUCTING CULTURE

ANANTA YUSUF

The modern story of photography is more impressive than its cloudy early days. In this era, technology seems to have reached a new height with the advent of 'mobile clicks'. Now everyone, in cities and even remote hamlets is a photographer, and photojournalism has opened its otherwise enclosed boundary to every citizen. Photography has sprung out all its brevity through new media, but before the arrival of this new era photography used to be confined to newspapers, and literary and entertainment magazines.

As cultural analyst Walter Benjamin says, "The amateur who returns home with great piles of artistic shots is in fact no more appealing a figure than the hunter who comes back with quantities of game that is useless to anyone but the merchant." He also adds that the day indeed seems to be closer "when there will be more illustrated magazines than game merchants. So much for the snap shots."

Benjamin was right, because in modern times we cannot imagine a single magazine illustrated without photos. And undoubtedly, it helps the photographer to sustain economically but the thirst for knowledge in their mind remains where it was, since there was no magazine fully dedicated to photography. Bizarrely, photography trailblazers in the country did not show any interest in setting up a specialised magazine while photographers of the West were busy developing the medium and its theoretical aspect.

However, after years of waiting, a photography magazine called 'Counter Photo', which deals with socio-economic analysis, was launched in December 2004. It portrayed the legends from home and abroad, criticised the western ways of

seeing the oriental life, examined the style of image from economic, social, technological, and political perspectives.

Acclaimed photographer Saiful Huq Omi, editor of Counter Photo, believes that the magazine was an inventory of human perception, "Counter Photo and Drik Picture Library Ltd jointly published the magazine. But I don't know why Drik stopped financing the project and thus, soon after the first edition we had to stop publishing."

But it continued to flourish in other ways. Counter Photo had set up a photography school to promote its idea and core values. The formal journey of the school started in 2012 and within a short span of time, its students have achieved international recognition at the Ian Parry Scholarship (IPS), 2013.



Kazi Riasat Alve, *Life at Suhrawardy Udyan.*

A post of IPS on its Facebook page congratulates the 2013 winner Farzana Hossen for her strong set of images on violence against women ('Lingering Scars'). The IPS website praises the winning portfolio, saying Hosen tells a "personal story with brave and intelligent visual story, telling of great strength and depth of composition."

Her photograph is reminiscent of the common woman. According to a research of University of Utha, more than 2,000 years ago, the Roman law gave a man the right and authority to choose whether his wife had the right to live or die. In the 18th Century, Englishmen were allowed by law to discipline his wife and children with a stick or whip no wider than his thumb. This "rule of thumb" prevailed in England and America until the late 19th century. The rule of men over their wives still persists in most Asian countries till date.

Hossen's photographs reveal the unsuspected mark of violence that raises the questions - can the law alone bring changes to violence against women in the country? What are the core reasons behind violence that have been going on in the society for years?

Hossen tells *the Star*, "Violence against women is a global phenomenon and I think it is an important issue we should address to raise awareness and make social change. In Bangladesh, reports of violence against women are on the rise. We all know about it but keep silent."

Photographs are a way of imprisoning reality...

— Susan Sontag, On Photography

Two schools of thoughts persist regarding portrait photography. One of them seeks emotional appeal and a deeper meaning in portraits and the other believes that a portrait cannot always display the bigger landscape of life.

Farzana's work exhibited in Ian Parry's website is a colorful portrait of a woman who seems to be in solitude and is anxious about the uncertainty of her life. Aidan Sullivan Founder of IPS writes, "I am delighted that the judges have chosen another strong winning entry this year, both in terms of the importance of the subject and Farzana's remarkable personal story that brought her to approach it."

Omi believes that a story sprung out of experience can observe the world more intimately, "Her story involved with the people's emotion, so in other words she recites a common pain of women through photography and that is why she has won the IPS."

She also adds, "We should stand together and raise our voice against such crime. I want to continue my work on Women Violence and I would like to raise awareness for stopping this violence through my pictures."

Kazi Riasat Alve, another student of Counter Photo, was given a commendation at the IPS. His photographic journey named "Life at Suhrawardy Udyan" shows an individual's attitude towards people. His photographs mainly explore the expressions of people living in the park. In his story, through photos, he asked an important question about the conventional structure of the society and why, to an extent, it is not yet ready to accept people who are living below the poverty line.

Alve started his project on Suhrawardy Udyan. He believes that photography is an instrument of telling stories about people and is the only thing that can change our attitude towards the subaltern people.

"It was not an easy task, since the park authority does not allow you to take photos or idle away in it. Moreover, it took nearly a month to photograph my whole story, because I wanted to get close to the people to dig out their pain and joy," Alve says.

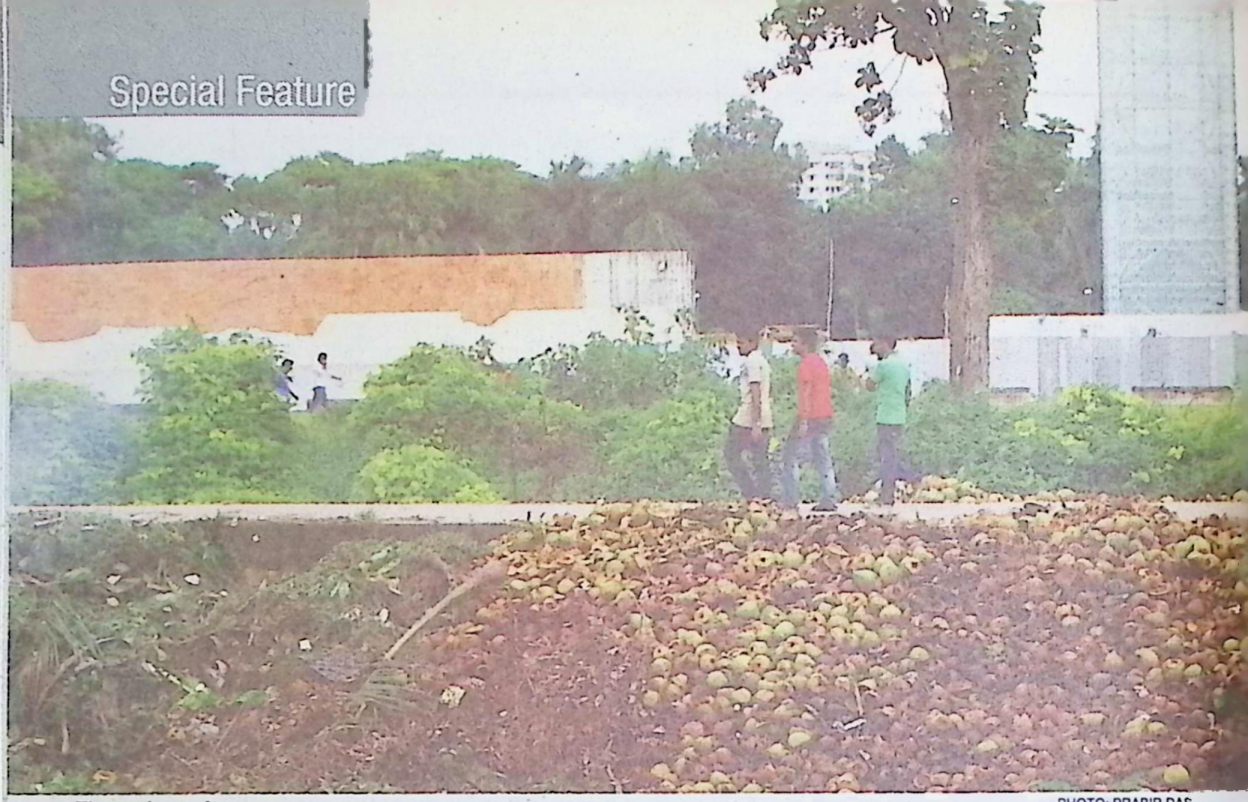


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The garbage dump near the monument where Bangabandhu delivered his historic 7th March Speech.

HISTORY WILL TEACH US NOTHING

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

It wasn't long ago that a friend of mine who is a foreigner had asked me, "Do you have any place in your country where you can feel the essence of your history?" My knowledge of the history of our Liberation War made me answer rather proudly, "Of course, we have. It's the campus of Dhaka University." In fact, every inch of it is swathed with the memories of our fight for emancipation. Of late, I decided to revisit these places to feel the sacrifice of our martyrs and the leaders who guided our nation in those days of turmoil.

On a merry day of autumn I went out to re-explore the good old DU campus. The most significant place near the campus that is related to our nation's history is the Suhrawardi Uddyan, the former Ramna race course, where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made his epic speech on March 7. It is also here that the Pakistani army surrendered to the allied command and Bangladesh became a free country. It is also the resting place of three of our national leaders: Khwaja Najimuddin, Hossain Shahid Suhrawardi and Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq. In fact, the entire Suhrawardi Uddyan is a national memorial.

But as soon as I entered the park, I felt a crushing blow. When I reached the spot where our Father of the Nation had addressed his fellow countrymen, my eyes and nose were overwhelmed with the stench of rotting garbage. A memorial has been erected on the spot. It is surrounded by a pool of water, and waste and garbage of different shades and smell are dumped in another shallow pool, also a breeding ground for insects and mosquitoes. Beside the pool, the thicket and the benches near the memorial are used as secure places for the modern day Romeo-Juliets. My presence was a disturbance to these busy lovers.

Seeing one pair covered their faces with an umbrella to hide from my presence, I thought it would be better to move and to let them enjoy the "freedom" to love, ironically in the same spot where as a nation we achieved the taste of freedom. I moved to explore more of Suhrawardi Uddyan but the visit was really distasteful. When I reached the beautifully built amphitheatre, the

architecture impressed me. But the manner in which this exquisite architecture is maintained is no less than appaling. It has become probably the largest open public toilet of the capital. All the floating residents of this park use it as a place to empty their bellies. If the authority could prevent this abuse and clean the gateway and passage it would be one of the places where healthy recreation would be possible.

The whole compound of Suhrawardi Uddyan has been occupied by homeless people. They are living in makeshift polythene shanties. It has been alleged that these people are involved in peddling



PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

Students' waiting room near TSC occupied by intruders and junkies.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Floating inhabitants of Suhrawardi Uddyan.

drugs and prostitution. Even many people including students can be seen in this compound smoking weed. So it was hard to think that this place might be considered holy due to its association with our liberation war but now it is not fit for a healthy stroll down our history.

It was with a heavy heart that I got out from the park and moved to the TSC, the DU heartland. It has always been cherished as the centre of intellectual activities of the country. The exquisite Raju Sculpture reflects the significance of this place in the history of the country's students' movement. The hot and sunny weather made me a bit tired and I badly wanted a place to sit. As I reached near the waiting room where the DU students were supposed to wait for the bus, I found it occupied. Heroin addicts use this place to get high; they have also turned this place into one big urinal.

The street that brushes past the TSC leads to another remarkable spot in our history-- the Shahid Minar. I found it rather clean as it has been frequently used for socio-political gatherings. But when not in use, Polybags, juice packs, dirt, rubbish find their resting place under the shadow of the monument. Under the large trees again I met some lovebirds. The epitome of our language movement has become a good place for chatting, dating and taking siesta for the homeless.

While walking down the streets of Dhaka University, the lack of maintenance of the historic buildings is quite eminent. The DU dormitories



The gateway to the amphitheatre of Suhrawardi Uddyan which made the arena completely unusable.

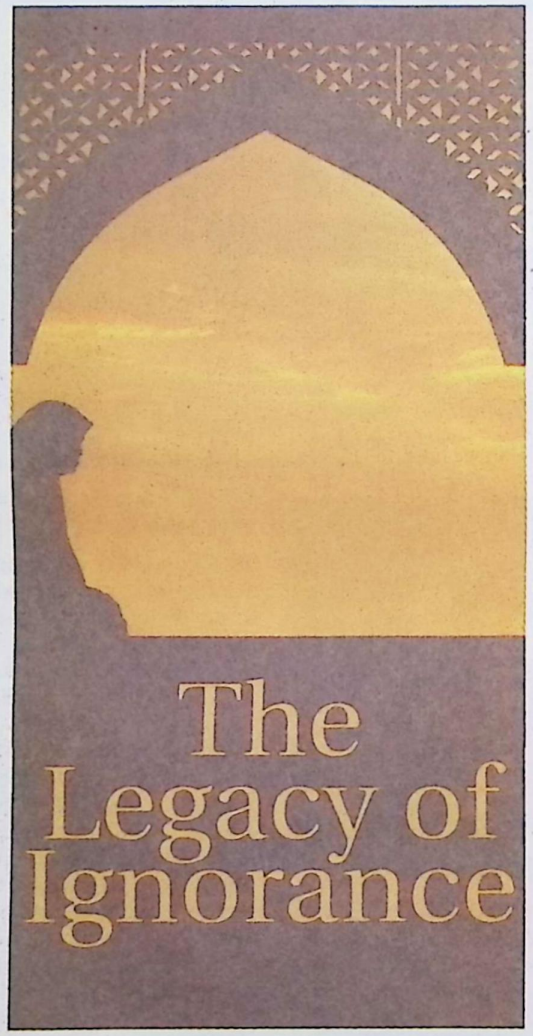
are also significant for our national history. Most of our leaders, authors and important personalities have resided in these halls. Dormitories like Jahurul Haq Hall, SM Hall, and Jagannath Hall were where our liberation movement against the Pakistani oppressors began. That's why in the black night of March 25, the Pakistani soldiers killed hundreds of students in these halls.

But many of these dormitory buildings are now counting their days. Some days ago a part of Rokeya Hall was about to collapse. The crippled Shontosh Chatterjee building of the historic Jagannath Hall is awaiting the same fate as that of the October tragedy building. Residents of Mohsin Hall fear another Rana Plaza- Tragedy. Most of these buildings have become derelict and weakened by lack of maintenance.

As a common citizen of Bangladesh I was wondering why our people and government became so forgetful of our history of struggle. Some claim that a government in favour of liberation war is now in power. But during their five years tenure why didn't they take any step to maintain the monuments linked with the history of our liberation war? What is the use of offering floral wreaths on some particular days if we neglect these places like cattle pitch in rest of the year? These were the thoughts flashing in my mind at the end of the day when my visit to these momentous places was finally over.

The writer can be reached at shahnawaz.khan@thedailystar.net

The Legacy of Ignorance



NADIA KABIR BARB

Many people have heard the saying "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing". In fact it is a misquote of the original line from a poem "An essay on criticism" by the British poet Alexander Pope.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
there shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
and drinking largely sobers us again.

There is even a Bangla saying — "olpo bidya bhoyonkor". This kind of insufficient knowledge or lack of understanding is one of the root causes of misconceptions, whether it is to do with other countries, cultures, religions or even a particular incident or situation. We hear something from someone, read an article in the papers or see media coverage of an event in the news and are often quick to judge and frequently condemn. A lot of the time it is without knowing the full facts or having an in depth understanding of the situation.

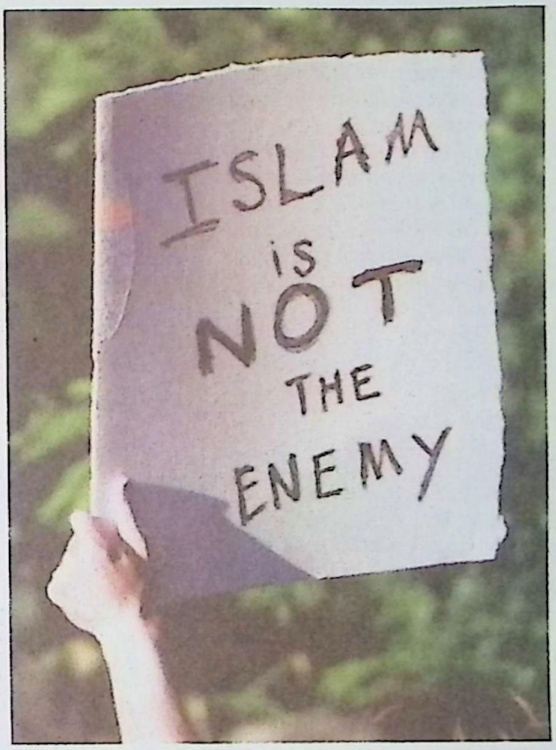
Recently, I have been asked in various shops, where I am from. When I tell them I come from Bangladesh, they look surprised and ask me if I am Muslim. Not that it happens to be any of their business what religion I may follow, I still politely tell that them that I am indeed Muslim. Once again they seem surprised by this and point at my head and state the obvious that I do not wear a hijab. I try my best to politely explain to them that not all Bangladeshi women, in fact not all Muslim women wear hijabs. It is a personal choice and does not make us any less 'Muslim' than someone who chooses to don the hijab or niqab. It is probably not my place to give them a crash course on the status of women in Islam. I refrain from informing them that since the inception of the religion, women have had the right to own and inherit property, marry according to their own free will, get divorced if necessary, enter into employment, receive an education and be treated as an equal to their male counterparts. Instead I smile at them and leave in a slightly frustrated frame of mind.

Misconceptions about Islam or Muslims in general have over the last decade or so become widespread especially after 9/11. Islam is perceived by many as a violent, barbaric and backward religion. Each terrorist attack carried out by some Islamic group chips away at the credibility of Islam as being a practical, progressive and peaceful religion. The recent attack in the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi leaving over 68 people dead and many more injured and missing is yet another tragic example of a group of militants, al-Shabaab in this particular instance, using Islam for their own agenda. I wonder how many people will register that this reprehensible act was carried out in retaliation to the events in Somalia since 2011 where around 4,000 Kenyan troops were dispatched across the border with the sole intention of hunting down and destroying al-Shabaab, and actually has virtually nothing to do with religion per se. What will be remembered is that 'Islamist gunmen' massacred innocent people, yet again. No amount of shouting from the rooftops will convince everyone that this kind of terrorist attack is not condoned by the majority of Muslims around the world and is against the teachings of Islam.

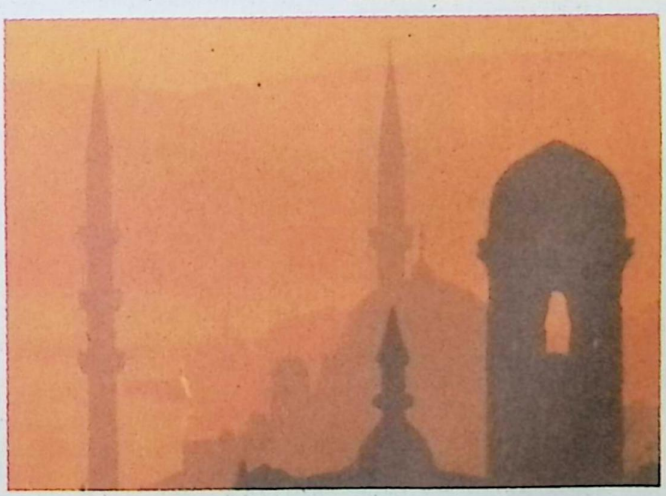
Thanks to groups such as al-Qaeda or al-Shabaab, Muslims around the world have become vilified and hated. In my opinion, these types of organisations that use religion to perpetrate acts of terrorism are anti Islamic in nature as they go against the teachings of our religion. I don't believe it says anywhere in the Quran that blowing up innocent people or even yourself is acceptable. What worries me is that it perpetuates the miscon-

ceptions associated with Islam. I don't subscribe to the term 'Islamic terrorists', to me they are just terrorists and I would rather they do not drag my religion into their political agenda or their hate mongering and further tarnish the name of Islam.

Ignorance is truly a dangerous phenomenon. The recently crowned Miss America 2013, Nina Davuluri was subjected to a barrage of racist comments on various social networks such as Twitter. Some accused her of not being American, many called her an 'Arab' and others were outraged that a Muslim woman won the title. They even went as far as saying that she looked like a terrorist. If only those people had taken the time, they would have found out that Miss Davuluri was born and brought up in New York, is actually of Indian descent so not even remotely Arab and is Hindu and not Muslim. Not that any of these facts should have any bearing on the outcome of the contest. What is apalling is that these vitriolic remarks and prejudice seemed to be based solely on what she looks like.



Another fallacy that has on a few occasions had fatal consequences is the view that 'Islamic terrorists' have beards and wear turbans. Sadly this is a mental image and a stereotype that some misguided people have of what a terrorist looks like and since the September 11 attack, the Sikh community have frequently been targeted and become victims of hate crimes as they are mistaken for Muslims. Earlier in September, Columbia University professor Prabhjot Singh was assaulted by a group of young men and verbally abused because he was wearing a turban and had a beard as do many Sikh men. They called him a "terrorist" and referred to him as "Osama". Obviously they had no clue that the vast majority of Muslim men do not wear turbans nor do they all sport long flowing beards.



If I said to you that the Klu Klux Klan originated in America and therefore most Americans must be cross burning, racist bigots who find it acceptable to murder non whites and believe in white supremacy, you would tell me that I was spewing a load of nonsense and was being offensive and ignorant. Or at least I hope that is what you would say. I am sure it sounds like am stating the obvious but just because a group of individuals have certain beliefs and carry out acts that are unconscionable does not mean we can tar the entire population with the same brush. The problem is that there are people who just don't scratch beneath the surface and are happy to accept things at face value or buy into some sort of misperception i.e. Islamic fundamentalist carry out acts of violence therefore Muslims and terrorists are synonymous.

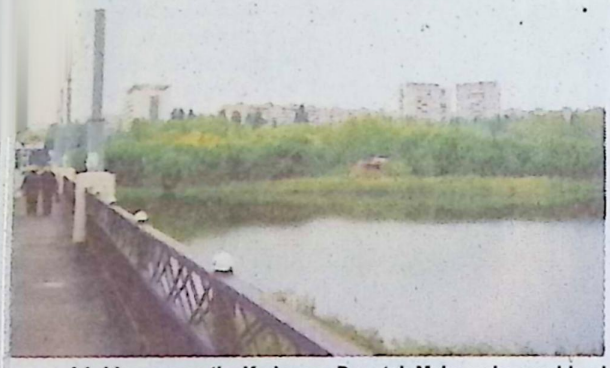
What is encouraging is that leaders of Muslim communities and even the communities themselves around the world are becoming more vocal about condemning the continuous acts of violence committed in the name of Islam and distancing themselves from these organisations. Maybe with a little more exposure to the true teachings of Islam and a social awareness of how the majority of Muslims live and what they believe, it will help to dispel the myths that surround the religion and its followers.

Saying Goodbye

ANDREW EAGLE

At 2 pm I glanced down the hall to the room they call the new big, in which I taught the teenagers of an evening. The language centre in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, was always growing, with a plan to convert the cellar into classrooms. The continual renovation made the term: new big. The room was decorated, with serviettes waiting to be cake-smeared and lollies for unwrapping. It was my last day.

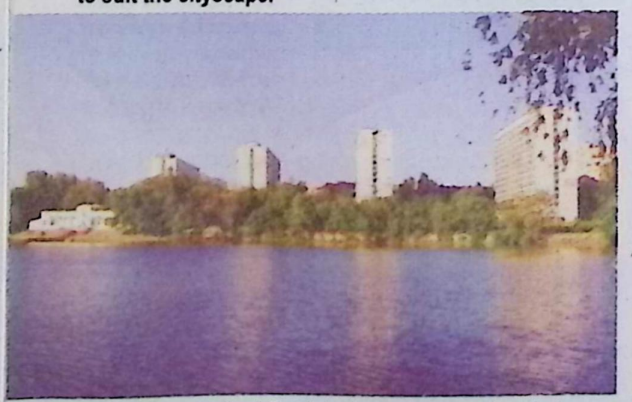
Thinking of my camera, two blocks away at home, I slipped into hat and coat. All eyes were upon me as I exited the cloak room. I wasn't supposed to know about the party. "I'll be back for my lesson at 6 pm," I said casually. Mouths dropped – I would miss my party – Marina realised first, of course, that I was joking.



A bridge across the Karlmeus. Donetsk-Makeyevka combined metropolitan area is home to around 2 million people.



The Karlmeus River is artificially widened in Donetsk to suit the cityscape.



Donetsk is a typical Soviet-planned city on the Karlmeus River in eastern Ukraine.

But it was Lena who donated her weekend to my first days in Donetsk almost a year earlier. In the cupboard of the Soviet apartment they'd chosen for me she'd left a jar of homemade plum jam with fruit from her mother's village garden. She pointed it out when we arrived on the first evening but didn't say she'd made it – by the smile in her eye I understood. It's a nice thing to have done for a total stranger. Meanwhile the institute had stocked the fridge with groceries and the receptionist Tanya had the jug boiled as I walked in the door.

I remember Lena at the airport – she had a 1960s hairdo and behind-the-iron-curtain clothes – feminine, becoming and quite different to western styles. I remember as we'd driven past the White House, the seat of city government, how Peter the driver said, "That's where the thieves live."

At lunch on the following afternoon, in a café by the Karlmeus, when I asked what Lena's ex-husband did, she replied, embarrassed, in her suave, winter-coat-thick accent, "We don't ask what people do in Ukraine." It was my first lesson. "There are many Ukrainians," she said, "who have money but are technically unemployed."

She's a mother of two but can never remember their ages. She started to explain how it was, life in and after the Soviet Union. "People should only create and not destroy," she said, "This is our history." She was worried about her children's futures in an uncertain, capitalist Ukraine.

Lena was most insistent I phoned Australia to tell my family I was alright. She almost came all the way from her house to drag me to the institute to do that, in the first days. "You are always so calm about everything!" she said, with frustration. But it's easy to be calm there.

Marina, meanwhile, was quiet until I discovered her sense of humour. We took to criticizing each other, for fun, as a sport. She used to say the most horrible things at meetings, about me, in front of the Director. And I loved it. Nor did she mind when I suggested she must've grown up in a circus and probably had circus elephants still living on her apartment's veranda.

One day she came to work in a cardigan that fashionably featured a single button, where there might normally be two or three. I pulled her aside



Autumn in a park in Donetsk.



Winter view from my apartment, Donetsk.

and said, straight-faced, "Don't worry. I know teachers' salaries aren't much. I will ask the other teachers to donate a few kopeks and we'll buy you a couple of extra buttons." She was outraged! I was laughing.

She coined my nickname: the difficult Australian. When we returned from summer holidays Lena said to Marina that I'd missed her. "Yeah," Marina replied, "Like a headache." It was the cue to start up again.

Yet sometimes we'd sneak away to eat flatbread-rolled kebab-like zapykankas in the park or deluxe hot dogs, Donetsk-style. Such hours were precious.

Classes would end late evening but if I found energy it was a simple matter to phone Svetlana. "Shall I stop by?" I'd ask. "Sure," she said, most often, "and why not bring a bottle of red?" We used to talk into the wee hours, and dance and sing. It's a good thing Ukrainian neighbours don't bother about noise.

Svetlana explained how living in Ukraine meant always having to consider how to earn money, with seemingly endless problems – a state of

affairs Bangladeshis can perhaps relate to. "But in Ukraine," she said, "people are still nice to each other. Nobody cares if their neighbour is having a nice life." And I saw that.

Once I was buying a bottle of wine at a kiosk by the marshrutka taxi stand, and the woman behind the counter asked in Russian, "Sweet or dry?" I asked for dry and the woman looked me up and down before saying, "Is it for a girl?" On the way to Svetlana's there was only one response: "Da". "You'll need a nice bottle then," she said, before scouring her selection to find the best. She checked the chocolate situation too.

On the weekends Svetlana and I would sometimes find a café to watch the afternoon pass, by tradition first meeting at our regular place: beside the left shoe of the Lenin statue in Lenin Square.

When it comes to Val – well, her kitchen is where I learnt much of what I came to know about Ukraine. She made sure I was well familiar with the cuisine.

It was through her I picked up additional classes with the three-year-old Senya. His mother wanted him to be bilingual. His classes were not stressful or rigid. The instruction was, "just play in English." And we did. Senya was obsessed with Spiderman.

At the end he had tears in his eyes. "When are you leaving?" he asked. "After eight days," I said, accurately.

"No," he replied firmly, "After three days!" He had the concept of bargaining but lost the concept of numbers at crucial moments. He hoped to lengthen my stay.

I mention Senya because he discovered a new term I came to embrace. From confusing English pronouns with his country, he once told Val he lived in "Mykraine." And that's the thing of it – it became Mykraine.

The language connected: they enjoyed when I invented words, in the way that happens in any living language, what you can't get in books. There was the Soviet washing machine I had, plastic, semi-manual, the size of a television set. You had to load the water by bucket before plugging it in. Lena chuckled when I called it the "electric bucket." And in the park after rain, when I pointed to a small flow into a drain and called it a waterfall, and was rebuked because it wasn't a waterfall, well, the English teachers took amusement when I said it was at least "waterfallish."



Soviet built war memorial in Donetsk.



Donetsk bus station.

With grammar: they knew the rules and I knew the answers. Team work: they could explain the former, which native speakers are not taught; while I helped apply the rules correctly.

The decoration and food in the new big: I'm not sure I wanted it. It represented such an enormous loss, about to come. On the other hand, as an Australian had once described my moving there as "throwing myself into a transcontinental abyss", well it hadn't been at all bad. Surely I could do it again?

I'd been dreading that there might be cake restrictions, as there were on Teacher's Day when each teacher had a single slice ration. I remembered those cucumber and parsley sandwiches with the bread cut so thinly they must've split grains of wheat in the process. The institute liked to save. But these things did not recur.

Instead both Lena and Marina gave speeches so full of praise I was convinced they were talking about somebody else; and Marina, in describing me, didn't use a single bad Russian word. ■

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A DEPARTURE FROM THE OBVIOUS

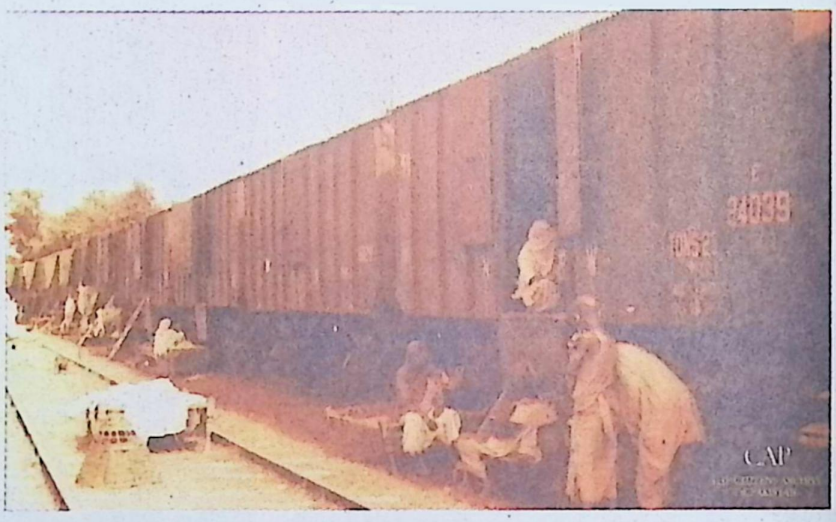
AMITAVA KAR



The Flag of Independence by Haroon Habib.

The September 21-26 photo exhibition at the Liberation War Museum was air-conditioning for the eye, and if you are susceptible to history, the soul. It showcased an unusually interesting mix of photos, giving a sense of what museums and art galleries can do when they depart, even a little, from the usual.

Take for example, *Home is Where the Train is* — a photograph illustrating a decommissioned train on the tracks of Walton Station in Lahore in the post- partition days in 1947. It shows refugees relaxing on wooden cots next to their makeshift home in the abandoned cars of a train. Their carefree attitude at this particular moment is as true as the horrors and needless bloodshed of the partition.



Home is Where the Train Is.

Lived Stories, Everyday lives is a travelling exhibition of some 27 digital image reproductions of photographs and prints from various private and institutional archival collections in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It showcases images from private collection highlighting the art of archiving and its intrinsic value to daily life. The theme: looking at history through the lens of the lives of the common man.

This art of finding the 'extraordinary' in the 'ordinary' is captured by *Faiz's Letter*, a reproduction of fragments of a letter Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz wrote to his wife from jail where he was incarcerated in the early 1950 for his role in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy. The letter touches on personal relationship, all the while never forgetting Faiz's role as a man of historical destiny.

The Learned Sisters of Agra is a photograph of seven sisters from Agra, , born between 1935 and 1946, holding their degrees with pride. At that time, women were photographed in this manner to prove that they were educated. Some of these images were used as matrimonial pictures. Sarita Ramamoorthy, programme manager of the Hri Institute for Southasian Research and Exchange, which in collaboration with the Liberation War Museum organised the exhibition says, "We did two exhibitions in India and one in Nepal. In India we took the exhibition to a small village in Ludhiana where people were excited to have something like this in their village. A lot of people showed up."

These photos tell stories of people who are often bypassed by the 'great' narratives of history offered through history books, and the media. *Uncle Bunnu and His Sisters*, a photograph from around 1910 shows Alec Cordeiro, a Goan Christian and his sisters who lived in Karachi. The sisters left Karachi right before the partition in 1947

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

The photographs look at history through the lens of ordinary people.



Uncle Bunnu and His Sisters (L) and Wedding Without a Bride (R).

but Bunnu stayed back. He never married, held a job for long, and saw his sisters after 1947. He died alone in 1984. To his sisters living hundreds of miles away in India, the memory of Bunnu was a warm, breathing presence as real as the time they were together.

Wedding Without a Bride is a reproduction of an invitation for a wedding anniversary from 1920. The invitation was from the couple's son in keeping with the tradition in Tamil Nadu where sons and daughters perform this ceremony for their parents. However, the invitation card misses to mention the name of the bride!

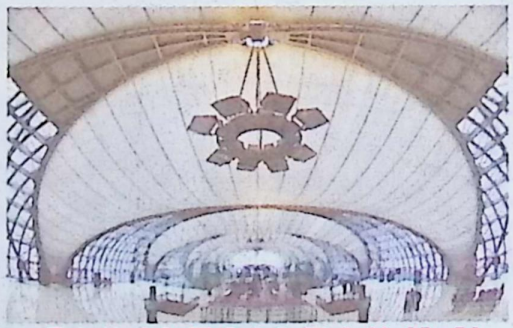
Four photos—two by Haroon Habib, paid tribute to the struggles and sacrifices of the ordinary men and women in 1971. *The Flag of Independence* shows a little girl holding the Bangladeshi Liberation War flag in celebration of freedom. The photograph was taken at a sugar mill colony in Dewangonj, northern Jamalpur District by Haroon Habib, minutes after the surrender of Pakistani military in on 16 December 1971.

In Portrait of a Martyr, nine family photos of Shaheed Baqui were showcased. He joined the liberation war as a university student and became a fierce fighter before being captured and killed by the Pakistani military. He is gone but his dream of a better country for all lives on.

All these images are at once historical and contemporary— transcending geographical and cultural boundaries.

Mofidul Hoque, a trustee of the museum says, "At first glance, these photos may not look anything special. But if you look closely, you can see that they carry significant messages through their mundane daily lives."

SUVARNABHUMI AIMS HIGH



When we were young, we yearned for top scores in our favourite subjects and to be top of the class. When people start their own companies, they want to get ahead of their peers. On the national scale, nations want to lead in what they are good at. Airports of Thailand's (AOT) dream to turn Suvarnabhumi Airport into the world's best large airport by 2019 falls into this category. A good airport is necessary as being the No.1 on the global tourism map means more income. Tourism is now the best economic engine for Thailand, as our trade and domestic consumption/investment drops.

But this will remain a dream without financial and non-financial investment. AOT Vice-Chairman Pongsak Semson is right in saying that the staff's language proficiency is a weakness. But improving this requires the staff's awareness that they must improve, plus financial investment for specifically designed tutorial courses.

Within Asean, Suvarnabhumi will find it hard to beat Singapore's Changi Airport. With English as its official language, Singapore has an English-speaking workforce. The flexibility of migrant workers also fills any shortages in certain areas. In Thailand, parents have to invest savings to improve their children's language proficiency, as the normal curriculum is not good enough.

International passengers often grumble about the shortage of English-speaking staff at the airport, as seen in their reviews gathered by Skytrax - an airline and airport ranking agency.

Another area that Suvarnabhumi Airport director Rawewan Netrakavesna wants to improve is the baggage transfer service. To draw more connecting flights, service time must be shortened, by May next year, from the current 75 minutes to 60 minutes. Rawewan, whose retirement comes next year, is right to focus on something she can do first, as the airport needs improvement in many areas to become No.1 in the Airports Council International's (ACI) ranking among airports annually handling over 40 million passengers.

In the passenger category, Suvarnabhumi - now at No.6 - trails behind Changi, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Seoul Incheon Airport is currently ranked the best airport in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by Changi, Beijing, New Delhi and Hong Kong.

If No.1 remains Suvarnabhumi's objective after Rawewan's departure, her successor will have to ponder many details. Comments from passengers can be a good guide (www.airlinequality.com), but can also be biased. Passengers have complained about restrooms, shops not accepting foreign currencies, shops having their own exchange rates, lack of signage, and long distances to walk.

In the latest Skytrax ranking, Suvarnabhumi failed to achieve five stars in any category. On the contrary, Changi was awarded five stars in many categories. One was for direction signage. Inside the terminal, it won five stars for seat availability (I vote for this too, as I can find a seat whenever I want to without having to go to a restaurant or food kiosk). It also won five stars for WiFi access (although for this I veto, as I unsuccessfully spent minutes trying to access it.) Five stars also went to air temperature, something that Suvarnabhumi has received a lot of complaints about since its opening in 2006.

Changi has never stopped enhancing its competitiveness. Despite winning five stars for leisure facilities and shopping, the airport recently unveiled "Project Jewel", which will connect all five of its terminals. The car park in front of Terminal 1 will become a world-class shopping complex in a move to capture tourists' attention and boost the country's appeal as a stopover point for global travellers. The complex will offer a wide range of retail outlets as well as unique leisure attractions.

According to The Straits Times, the latest master-plan for Changi involves creating a huge new air terminal, possibly with its own subway station; building a third runway at Changi East, fed by 40 kilometres of taxiways - the length of the Pan Island Expressway from Tuas to Tampines; and diverting Changi Coast Road and a 60-metre-wide canal. The effort, cost and upheaval will be enormous, but there are good reasons for supporting this sky-high ambition.

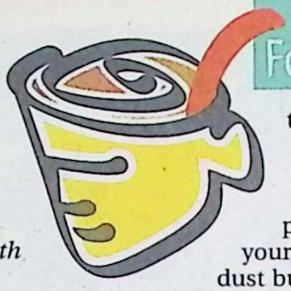
Singapore realises that Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok have a geographic edge in linking travellers from Europe to Asia. Former Singaporean leader Lee Kuan Yew pointedly warned in 2004 that "Changi will be bypassed and we will lose our air-hub status" if key strategies are misguided.

That explains why the Singapore government puts Changi in its national development plan and is ready to spend on it.

And what are Thailand's strategies? Well, AOT has ambitions but all actions are now financed by its own budget. Can we expect national strategies that will support its ambitions?

— **ACHARA DEBOONME**
ANN/The Nation


স্বর্ণোজ্জ্বল ত্বকের জন্য
Sandalwood Oil সমৃদ্ধ
স্যান্ডালিনা
স্যান্ডাল সোপ
Sandalina
Sandal Soap
Sandalina
Sandalina
Sandal Soap
রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...



The Writer's Dilemma(s)

FARAH GHUZNAVI

This is the fourth in a series of articles written by Farah Ghuznavi as Writer in Residence at the Commonwealth Writers website, based in the UK. Commonwealth Writers is the cultural initiative from the Commonwealth Foundation, and Farah is their first Bangladeshi Writer in Residence.

"Writing is like bricklaying, you put down one word after another. Sometimes the wall goes up straight and true and sometimes it doesn't and you have to push it down and start again, but you don't stop, it's your trade." That quote from Geraldine Brooks holds an important message for most of us who write (and on bad days, at least try to write). It captures the sheer laboriousness that is sometimes involved in putting down one word after another, one sentence after the next. And the utter frustration of realising that you have to take down the wall and start all over again, because something isn't working.

I have come across less generous versions of this message from other writers, who say that we should stop complaining about what hard work writing is. Their argument is that plumbers, bricklayers and accountants never say that they "don't feel like it", they just show up day in and day out and get the job done. There is undoubtedly some merit to that argument, but the great thing about plumbing, bricklaying or doing accounts is that in those trades, you can actually be confident that you know how to do what you have to do.

In most creative occupations, including writing, it's less straightforward. No matter how impressive their qualifications or their body of work, I suspect that few writers live completely without fear. Whether that is the fear of inadequacy, of outright failure, of losing the slender thread of inspiration or – for those lucky enough to have been deemed successful – the fear of not being able to do it again.

When you are stuck with a piece of work that doesn't seem to move, except sluggishly, when it feels as if nothing that you can come up with is working, there is often the temptation to just give up. If nothing else, there is the desire to procrastinate (I'm on first-name terms with this particular demon, by the way), and thereby avoid the inevitable unpleasantness for as long as possible.

And if you have a day job, family and friends, not to mention the audacity to pursue other interests, it may already be a challenge finding the time to write. After all, you could have any number of perfectly legitimate excuses to avoid getting down to it, beginning with the size of the laundry pile, the need to colour coordinate your files or the urgency of attending to the dust bunnies crying out for attention in the dark corners underneath your bed.

At times like that, the trick is to just keep going, as Brooks says. To come back to the desk/the computer/the notepad when you'd rather be doing something else, anything else. To give yourself permission to write something dreadful provided you actually write something.

And once you've done that, the second, equally important trick, is to give yourself a break for a while – especially when things aren't going as smoothly as you would like. Stop thinking about the story and do something completely different: take the dog for a walk, meet up with a friend, read a good book (which counts as "homework" of a sort) or watch TV (which doesn't). Just make sure that you commit to the other activity, whatever it is, instead of fretting about the state of your uncooperative Magnum Opus.

And when all else fails, have a nap. It is remarkable how helpful sleep, in particular, can be. One of the most unconstructive things that we do is to punish ourselves when the writing isn't going well is by keeping at it beyond a reasonable period of time, thereby more or less guaranteeing that it won't go well.

Let's face it – even at the best of times, writers tend to have a number of legitimate worries: what to write about (without alienating your entire family), how to write well, how to find an agent/publisher/readership, the list is endless. The only way to survive is to focus on the most important thing: writing.

One of the most basic challenges is to set, and stick to, a proper routine. Many writers measure their progress by word count, others by the hours spent working, yet others by how good the work produced actually is. The last of these is of course a slippery slope, because it also brings into play the Jekyll & Hyde aspect(s) of the writer's persona, when you swing perilously between the pendulum of thinking that you have written something reasonably good (or, in the case of people rather more confident than me, something brilliant) and the utter conviction that you've wasted hours/days/months on producing execrable nonsense.

It can be useful to have a set of beta readers who can be relied upon to provide more objective feedback than you are capable of giving yourself. And it is worth figuring out what routine works best for you – whether it is defined by word count, hours worked, time of day or some other criterion. For example, despite years of trying to pull off the "early to bed, early to rise" habit, I have had to face up to the fact that the most productive time for me is between 10 pm and 2 am. Needless to say, it plays havoc with the rest of my life, so I'm still fighting it. And my "routine" essentially consists of squeezing out any block of time that I can find, and using it to work on my current project, of shutting down my overactive conscience when it points out that I need to respond to emails or people, and of prising myself away from the seductions of social media. That's my "three step programme"!

Most of the time this works because it has to. The reality of any writer's life is that there is a host of distractions clamouring to help facilitate procrastination. Someone recently told me that she couldn't write unless she was on holiday, and I had to prevent myself from laughing out loud. The idea of writing only while on holiday is a luxury that most of us cannot imagine; nor would that approach be particularly useful in my case since it's been quite a while since I last had a proper holiday.



With Mila. PHOTO: PRITO REZA

If you come from a developing country, there is yet another set of challenges to be met, not least the pervasiveness of stereotypes.

ChimamandaNgoziAdichie gave a wonderful TED talk on the dangers of a single narrative, describing how many of the people that she spoke to felt that there was only one kind of Nigerian story to be told. Her work was initially greeted with scepticism because it didn't fit the expectations of those in the industry. In her case, of course, what happened thereafter is publishing history. But many of us who write from developing countries in the Commonwealth face similar problems of preconceived notions, including the demand for a writer to tell a story that fits the expectations of agents, publishers and some imaginary audience "out there".

Such external pressures are often detrimental to producing your best work. The preoccupation with what the market wants has led, increasingly, to the idea that a writer must write with an audience in mind. I don't agree. Most writers want their work to be published, and put in time and energy to achieve that end – as they should. But I suspect that most of us essentially write because we have to, because we are driven to, because it fulfils some deep-seated need for expression and catharsis and communication that has very little to do with "the market".

Writing that is issue-driven or market-driven isn't necessarily going to be a writer's best work, because that tends to come out of emotions and ideas that are deeply embedded in their psyche. It's no accident that some of the best "first novels", those that appear polished and almost magical in their clarity, are also those which have taken a while to incubate. So in the end you may have to make a choice – will you try to chase the market with a story that is designed primarily to sell (which in any case can be a dubious proposition in terms of your chances of success), or will you write what you want to write, and focus on marketing it once you have produced the best book that you are capable of?

This is a particularly important question, because in the twenty-first century, writers are bombarded with advice. One of your biggest challenges will be to sift through all of it, and decide what works for you. Not all of it will, however talented the source of the advice may be. Kurt Vonnegut came up with a sound place to start: "Write to please just one person. If you open a window and make love to the world, so to speak, your story will get pneumonia." For me, this advice hits home. And I would further suggest that if you do write to please just one person, that one person should, first and foremost, be you.

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http://www.commonwealthwriters.org/the-writing-process-farah-ghuznavi-responds-to-your-input/

You can read more about Farah's work here: http://www.commonwealthwriters.org/farah-ghuznavi/

Music Sans Frontiers

UPASHANA SALAM

Music is all about interaction, it's all about the special connect that you make with your audience in the few hours of a performance. Brazilian classical guitarist Arnaldo Friere doesn't need words to communicate with his audience nor does he have an array of instruments to display his skills. All he has is a simple guitar, and that's all he needs to transport his audience to a few hours of musical bliss.

Friere performed to a packed audience in a concert organised by Alliance Francaise de Dhaka (AFD) and the Embassy of Brazil in Bangladesh on May 9 at AFD's La Galerie. the Star Magazine caught up with the maestro to learn more about his stay in Bangladesh, his future projects and his ideas of enhancing appreciation of world music in the country.

The Serendipitous Tour

"I didn't originally plan to come to Bangladesh. I was invited to perform at the Guitar Festival in Hong Kong, and as it is quite far from Mexico, where I currently live, I decided to make the tour as productive as I could. Many social interactions begin and end on Facebook in these modern times, and so, through this social networking site, I began to communicate with musicians and music lovers from all over the world.

Incidentally, I saw a video of students from the Classical Music Academy of Dhaka perform a composition by Russian musician Tchaikovsky. I was so impressed by the beautiful interpretation that I contacted Iftekhar Anwar, the cello performer at the academy. Anwar also teaches at Alliance Francaise and he made this concert happen. So, I first played in India, then there was the festival in Hong Kong and then I performed in Bangladesh."

Erasing Boundaries

"I teach music at a foundation that offers training for poor students in Brazil. There are over 12 students and we also have a Facebook page. So, when I came here, I asked Iftekhar to help me out by making tutorial videos that could be put up on the page. My students can learn from these tutorials and can even improvise in their own way. This is the best thing about music; you don't need to be from the same country or understand each other's language to share your knowledge with others."

First Tryst with Music

"I was adopted, and I don't know who my biological parents are. My father was Portuguese and so there was a lot of Portuguese music being played at our house when we were growing up. However, I learnt to appreciate world music as I grew older. Interestingly, I am the only musician in the family. One of my sisters is an industrial designer and the other is a homemaker.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Brazilian classical guitarist Arnaldo Friere.

You know, I was not supposed to be a guitarist in the first place. When I was around 11, I asked my father to get me a piano because I was a huge fan of Elton John. He got me a guitar, instead! (laughs) I kept the guitar and learnt how to play it. And the rest as they say..."

Teaching Vs Live Performances

"It's basically two sides of the same coin. I have more freedom in live performance, so I can improvise. As for teaching, you have to follow strict rules, you have to be disciplined and teach through examples. But that doesn't mean that I don't like teaching, on the contrary, I love it, particularly when I meet well-prepared, diligent ones, like the students of CMAD."

Teaching and Learning

"Students from the CMAD performed at my concert here before I took the stage. We called this performance "Echoes From Dhaka", in honour of the various sounds you get to hear in this city! I had only met and practiced with them once before the performance and I didn't even need to teach them anything; I just had to make some corrections and that was that! Their performance was pitch-perfect.

For one of my sessions with the students, I tried to teach them Samba music and assigned four people as the vocalists with each person playing a different, unique sound. They created the piece within 10-12 minutes, which was very interesting. Of course, as we say in Brazil, it was Japanese Samba (smiles) but they were still quite good."

The Acquired Taste

"Music is without borders. Even though I didn't grow up listening to world music, I develop my senses to accept and understand music from different countries. From the last three years, I listen to music Madagascar, Tunisia, Turkish, Iran on world radio every week – it's amazing! If you have only heard Western music all your life, music from other parts of the world will sound very strange to you. You have to continue listening to world music to develop actual, holistic knowledge and interest in music. Only after repeated hearings will you be able to understand the mathematics behind a particular music culture and only then will you be able to truly appreciate music in its varied forms."



Foiere regaled the audience at Alliance Française de Dhaka. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Sounds of Music

"The music scene in Brazil is very interesting because we are a multi cultural country. Songs and compositions are inspired by the music of countries as culturally different as Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy and others. We want our people to appreciate music and thus, concerts are held here every day. However, we cater to everybody not just the elite society. In Russia, for example, concerts are organized every day as well but these are not free, you will have to pay a substantial amount to enjoy a live performance. Concerts in Sao Paulo, on the other hand, are usually priced at half a dollar and you get to enjoy different kinds of performance, starting from guitar concerts to piano recitals to chamber orchestras, opera, etc.

This sense of music appreciation needs to be improved in Bangladesh. You could begin by holding concerts featuring international musicians every month, and then gradually you could bring it to a week. This could be done with support from the government and organizations like the CMAD."

Appreciation Starts from Childhood

"In order to develop a culture of music appreciation, it is important to develop a sense of music within children from infancy. In Europe, you learn music the way you'd learn an important language. When a child is around 10 years old in many countries of Europe, they know how to 'read' music, they know all the classical composers, thus contributing towards a richer culture. World music appreciation needs to be a mandatory subject in every school, as a country's culture can only be enhanced when its children are well informed.

Folk music in Bangladesh is very rich but I can't take this back to my country because often times I don't find the required music notes. Sadly, there is no practice of protecting old music in Bangladesh. Preserving the ancient, traditional folk music of the country is of utmost importance, as this is a part of Bangladesh's culture, its history. There are lots of good composers in this country but we often let their music just die with them."

Coming Back

"I will next be performing in Nepal before heading off to Ukraine and then to Germany and finally to Mexico. I hope to come back to Dhaka next year with a vocalist, a percussionist and a bassist. With three to four more musicians, we could actually hope to arrange a Brazilian Music Festival here! (smiles)"

Music Heals

"My wife passed away in 2004 and my child died last year. Music helps as it requires enormous creativity and attention. When you are a musician, you are providing happiness to everyone, including yourself."

The Power of the Human Spirit

FAYZA HAQ

Shahabuddin's canvases are full of massive, dynamic figures. He appears to put magic in the impossible to depict the winning of the land in nine months the Liberation War of '71'.

The muscle bound limbs, torsos, and the fingers are alive with energy. He exaggerates, but this is with a purpose to make the images overlap one another, as the brush sweeps and glides to depict warriors at war with the occupiers.

Asked about his role in the fighting with the marauding Pakistan army, he says, "I fought the war in Comilla. I joined the freedom struggle in April 1971. I was in Dhaka when there was a crackdown in March. I was in Narsingdi, across Bahairab and headed for Agartala. I did go to Calcutta too – my aim was to study art there. I was 21 at that time. My paintings present the pulse of life of the struggle of the freedom movement. Incidentally, Khoka, the former mayor of Dhaka, was also with us. I was responsible for one platoon."



Angry Bull, oil on canvas.

Shahabuddin, completing his paintings in his Kolabagan five-storied building, goes on to say: "There were eleven sector commanders. The first was Shafiullah, the Second Commander covered Dhaka, Comilla and Faridpur. As a guerrilla fighter, we had to get food and water, and then pick up our

weapons. On the Shalda River we fought against the invading Pakistan forces. We were in the Laksham area in Comilla. In September we went to Raibazaar with my platoon. I was familiar with this place as in my childhood we did outdoor water colour in this area. We went to the villages of Kloida, where there was only one Hindu village. We had to go in slowly, as Dhaka was in the hands of the enemies."

His parents had seen to it that he drew with skill and there was a weekend class for children at the art college, which he attended with glee. "When I copied, I got the cuff from my father, but this did not deter me. Today my paintings are in the national museum of Barcelona and Valencia. I went to Barcelona during the 1988 Olympics, there were 50 master contemporary artists—this included painters form Holland, the US, France etc.



16 December '71, oil on canvas.



Two Horses, oil on canvas.

What took him to France, where he is now a permanent resident? He got a French government scholarship in 1974, it was for four years—but it was extended for two more years. "Now I have a studio."

What were the things that influenced him there? Lots of things, says the artist. All impressionist painters played an important role in his work. "I fell in love with the work of Francis Bacon. I consider myself an expressionist painter," he says, "It is my own style – and not something I picked along the way in France or Germany."

The master painter says that the city that has fascinated him the most is Paris, which contains the best gallery in the world along with architectural beauties like the Louvre, Versailles, the Eiffel tower the Pigal, and the churches which included the sculptures and paintings of high renaissance artists like Leonardo de Vinci and Michelangelo. He admires Boticelli , Raphael and Titan too.

He does not want to move from Paris as it has so much to offer. He left Bangladesh in 1974. Today in 2013, France is like the artist's second home. From the age of 24, his philosophical space and freedom to work at will has guided his artistic endeavours.

"I also enjoy the high Renaissance period, that is why I do not leave the place," says the maestro, "I'm lucky to find a place here." There are 40,000 official painters in Paris. The competition is difficult; there are 200 professional galleries in Paris.

With so many galleries mushrooming in Dhaka, does he feel that the gallery owners control the output of the artist? The master painter says that in Europe, the gallery owners are more in control. There are a lot of artists in Paris. Here the major artists are all like family members, says Shahabuddin.

Asked about the teachers who influenced him the most, he says that it was Zainul Abedin – with great pride. "For the outdoor painting lessons", he says, they were obliged to go to the railway station, meat markets and the Buriganga. For us it was a must. "At our time the rivers were not polluted as they are today. With the influx of workers from the villages, and each family owning three cars each, the pollution of every type is enormous."

Shahabuddin can boast of eight coveted awards—both national and international.

His exhibition at Chitrak opened on September 28.

Do not ignore important signs and symptoms — from sudden weight loss to flashes of light — and know when to seek medical care.



7 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Chest pain, an upset stomach, sudden loss of vision or speech, and severe abdominal pain require immediate medical attention — but what about more signs that are more subtle in nature? We may not know what to do. Here's a list of seven signs and symptoms that demand attention for maintaining a healthy life.

1: Unexplained weight loss

If you are losing weight without trying might sound like a dream come true, but in reality it can signal an underlying health problem. If you've lost up to 10 percent of your weight during the past six months — for instance, 15 pounds (7 kilograms) if you weigh 150 pounds (68 kilograms) — it is time to go see your doctor immediately.

An unexplained drop in weight could be caused by various conditions — including overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism), diabetes, depression, liver disease, cancer or disorders that interfere with how your body absorbs nutrients (malabsorption disorders).

2: Persistent or high fever

A fever always isn't necessarily a cause for alarm. Fever seems to play a key role in fighting infection. Having said that, if your fever has continued for more than three days, get checked by your doctor. Persistent fever can signal a hidden infection, which could be anything from a urinary tract infection to tuberculosis. In some cases, cancerous (malignant) conditions — such as lymphomas — cause prolonged or persistent fevers, as can some medications.

If you have a high fever — 103 F or higher — consult your doctor as soon as possible.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

3: Shortness of breath

If you're unable to get your breath, or you're gasping for air or wheezing, seek emergency medical attention. Shortness of breath that feels more severe than what's caused by a stuffy nose or vigorous physical activity could signal an underlying health problem. Feeling breathless when lying down also is a symptom that needs to be evaluated promptly.

Causes for breathlessness may include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, a blood clot in the lung (pulmonary embolism), as well as other heart and lung problems. Difficulty breathing can also occur

with panic attacks — episodes of intense anxiety that can cause rapid heart rate, sweating, shortness of breath and other physical symptoms.

4: Unexplained changes in bowel habits

What's considered normal for bowel movements varies widely. Consult your doctor if you notice unusual or unexplained changes in what's normal for you, such as:

- Bloody, black or tarry-colored stools
- Persistent diarrhea or constipation
- Unexplained urges to have a bowel movement

Changes in bowel habits could signal a bacterial infection — such as campylobacter or salmonella — or a viral or parasitic infection. Other possible causes include irritable bowel syndrome and colon cancer.

5: Confusion or personality changes

Seek medical attention if you have:

- Sudden confused thinking
- Confusion about time or place (disorientation)
- Sudden problems with concentration or memory
- Sudden personality or behavior changes, such as becoming aggressive

Changes in behavior or thinking could be caused by many problems, including infection, anemia, low blood sugar, dehydration or mental health conditions. Sometimes medications contribute to confusion or personality changes.

6: Feeling full after eating very little

If you consistently feel full sooner than normal or after eating less than usual, get checked by your doctor. This feeling, known as early satiety, also may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, bloating, fever, and weight loss or gain. If so, be sure to tell your doctor about these signs and symptoms as well.

Possible causes of early satiety include gastroesophageal reflux disease, commonly known as GERD, and irritable bowel syndrome. In some cases, a more serious problem — such as pancreatic cancer — could be a factor.

7: Flashes of light

Bright spots or flashes of light and other visual disturbances sometimes indicate a migraine. In other cases, sudden flashing lights could signal retinal detachment. Immediate medical care can help prevent permanent vision loss.

Courtesy: Mayo Clinic

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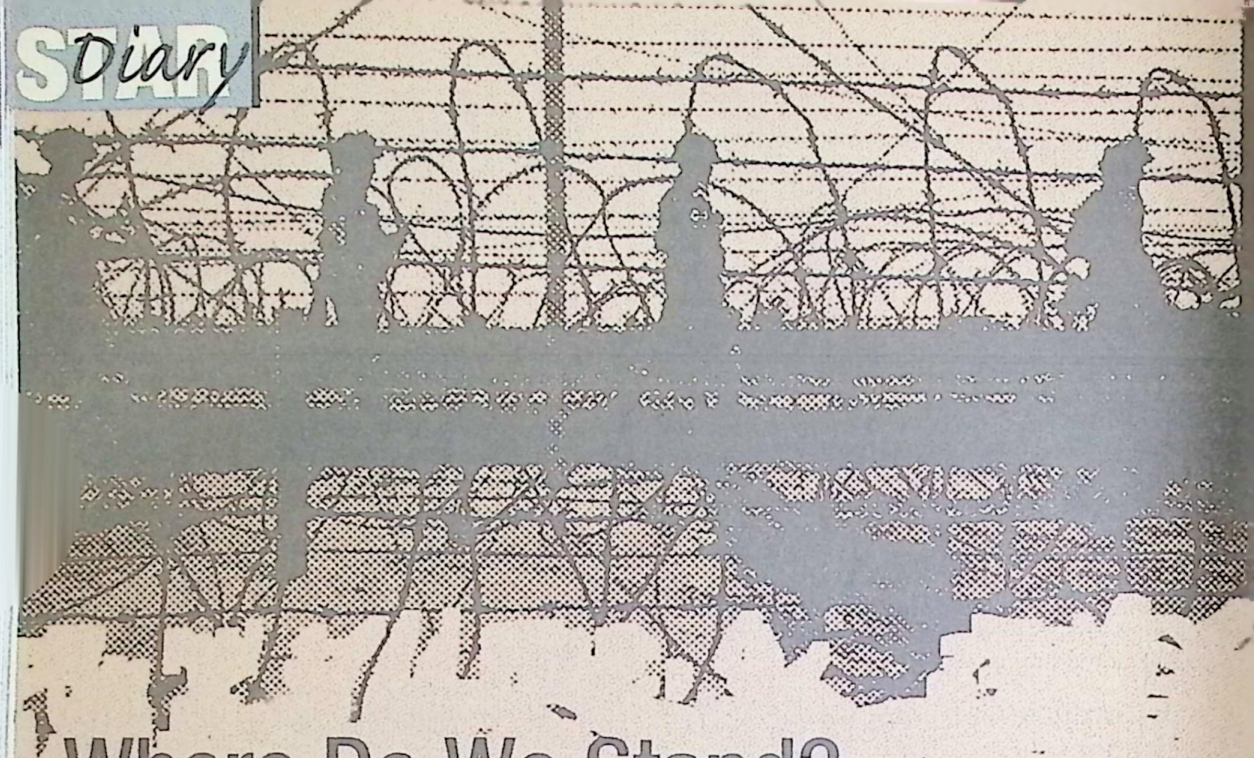
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Where Do We Stand?

While surfing channels on the TV, a news scrolling down a newsfeed caught my eye. It read 'Farmer choked to death by the BSF.' I had earlier read that the Indian government had discouraged the Indian BSF from gunning people down at the Bangladesh-India border. The country felt relieved by this news, as that meant that the number of our people murdered at the border would decrease. But who knew that an alternative to bullets would lead to more innovative ways of killing Bangladeshis. Opening fire on unarmed civilians, by itself, is a severe breach of international regulations. However, strangling a farmer from across the border to death for an act as simple as cutting grass is unprecedented and reflects an inexplicable act of vengeance. While we now understand that India values its grass tremendously, the BSF needs to realise that the price tag on a human life is a tad bit higher. I was further shocked to realise that this was no breaking news and neither did the murder make the headlines. Instead, it was meshed with other less significant local news, giving the impression that this was an everyday occurrence that we, as a nation, were very used to. The next day's newspapers carried no screaming headline expressing outrage on this shocking news in the front-page, only a normal back-page story covered it. That left me wondering; is our media so busy covering more significant news that it's alright for such an incident to take a backseat? Have we become desensitized to the fact that our fellow brothers and sisters are being pointlessly murdered at our border? It is high time to rethink our priorities, for the sake of ourselves and for the sake of the values that we intend to uphold.

Tasnim Jara
Dhaka Medical College

TRUTH OR DARE

I was drinking a cup of tea in front of a laundry shop when I overheard a conversation between the laundryman and a couple of customers. One of the customers complained about exhaustion due to the scorching heat. The laundryman then replied, "Allah is unhappy with us. He is making us suffer with extreme heat because of meting out injustice to a noble man like Sayeedi." I asked him, "Are you serious?" The laundryman nodded his head.

"Why do you think like that?"

He replied, "Sayeedi is a religious man. We have given him death sentence without any valid proof. Allah is angry at us."

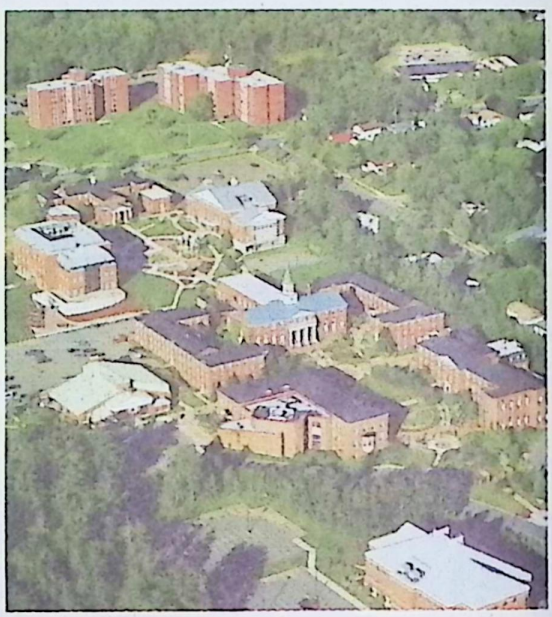
The customers and everyone around were a little shocked and a conversation ensured about the heinous crimes committed by Sayeedi during the Liberation War of 1971. I do not know whether the laundryman would agree with us or not, but it is shocking to note that many of our countrymen do not know about true history of our country. We all should be blamed for that.

Nasih Ul Wadud Alam
Stamford University, Dhaka


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Ryan Sullivan is the Director of International Recruitment at STU has traveled several times in recent months to engage in outreach activities South Asia. His experience has shown him that STU has become a crucial stepping stone for growth so students from across the globe can prosper as a result of their liberal arts education.

"STU is an amazing opportunity for students who seek a first-class education that prepares them to be active and thoughtful citizens of whatever community they belong to."

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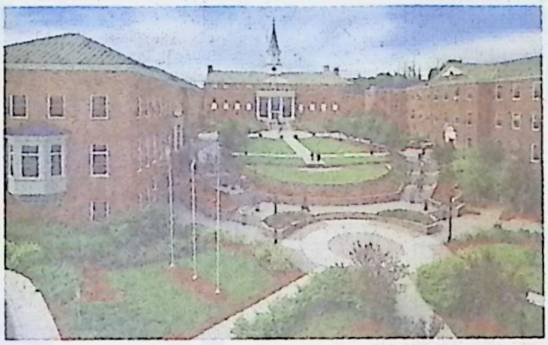
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STU Alumni around the World

Award winning authors, Rhodes Scholars, inspiring teachers, judges, celebrated journalists, compassionate social workers, and talented leaders in business, law, and government say St. Thomas was the foundation for success.

STU alumnus and Former Prime Minister of Canada, Rt. Honorable Brian Mulroney describes the opportunity that STU can offer to the students of today, "you're going to a place where you can have big dreams and you can achieve great things because of the foundational aspects of what you're being taught here and what you're learning. It transformed my life. I think the same thing can happen to you."





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International students are permitted to work on or off campus while studying full-time, allowing them to gain valuable work experience while earning some extra money. Students who choose to stay and work in New Brunswick (NB) after graduation and take advantage of the NB Tuition Rebate (up to $20,000).

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St. Thomas also offers a great array of extra-curricular activities in such areas as debating, drama, journalism, community radio, or student government. In addition, social events and informal activities such as coffee houses and concerts liven up almost every evening and weekend.

St. Thomas offers five residence halls with over 850 places for students to choose from. Three are located in the centre of campus and two are a 15-minute walk from our main courtyard.

Find out more

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about attending a Canadian university or college, then be sure to visit www.canada123.org - or, drop by the CUAC Dhaka office – located on Hosna Center, 2nd Floor, 106, Gulshan Avenue.

On Friday, October 18th, Canadian university representatives will be present at The Westin Dhaka, ready to answer all your questions in person! This event, however, is by INVITATION ONLY, so if you're interested in attending, please contact us in advance by email, at dhaka@canada123.org , or by phone, at 8826445 or 01911365221.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON!

WHEN: Friday, 18th October - 12 noon to 8 pm
WHERE: The Westin Hotel, Gulshan 2, Dhaka
PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES: Winnipeg, Algoma, Bishop's, St. Thomas, & Saint Mary's (SMU).
PARTICIPATING COLLEGES: Confederation College, Sault College, Lethbridge College.

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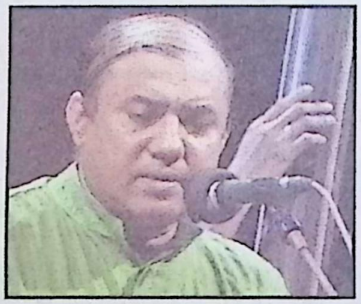
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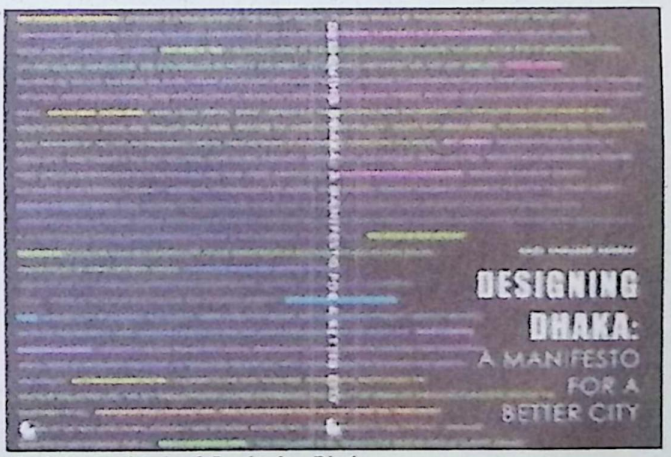
Re-visioning Dhaka

Kazi Khaleed Ashraf's imagined city

SYED MANZOORUL ISLAM

Can Dhaka be saved? Can it be made livable again, and turned into the green and friendly city it once was? Can its crazy landscape of high-rise ghettos, random shopping centres, festering slums and residential neighbourhoods that have also morphed as business districts and commercial hubs be ever redrawn to reflect a proper urban environment? Or, for that matter, can its decaying public places and decrepit parks overrun by squatters, drug dealers and vendors of various dispositions be ever reclaimed and restored to their primary functions? Or its dysfunctional traffic system given a shot in the arm and made to run the way it runs in cities of comparable size, population or importance?

No one should be surprised if the answer to the above questions is a resounding 'no' – such is the pessimism that Dhaka's urban reality breeds, which even grips city planners and administrators. To be fair to them, they have done their part: their have been many projects and plans to revive the city and give it some semblance of order and coherent environment, but none of these plans even reached the stage of implementation.



Kazi Khaleed Ashraf, Designing Dhaka: A Manifesto for a Better City
Dhaka: Loka, 2012

Dhaka has long reached the limits of ecology and morphology; it has missed all the buses to modernisation. It is a city in perpetual crisis – it has no zoning law, no public transport system, no solid waste management or pollution control strategies, no density distribution, no properly functioning public utility system, , no neighbourhood parks or playing fields or empty spaces, not much of social security and hardly any provision for open air cultural activities. It is plagued by overcrowding which has been triggered by Dhaka's pre-eminent omniscientrality as successive governments and the corporate sector have placed all their head offices in Dhaka. Dhaka has little respect for its archives. Except for the street lines, most of Dhaka is in a state of flux. It doesn't allow its citizens to nurture memories. It is a city that takes pride in concentration and city centre living; it is paranoid about connecting with peripheries

Dhaka's social ecology is a mess; it hardly inspires a concept of place.

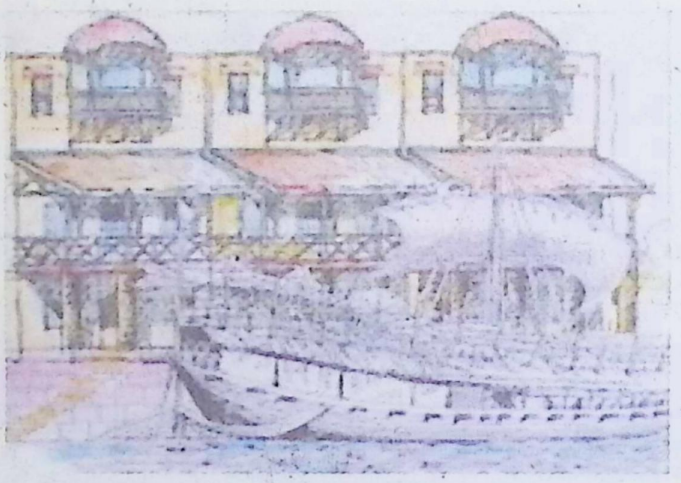
Dhaka has never been able to optimize its size or its population; or zone out its schoolsand other non-residential elements.

Dhaka, a riverfront city, has no connection with water. Reclaimed waterbodies fall victim to encroachment and earth filling and eventually disappear.

In a recent survey conducted by the London-based Economist Intelligent unit Dhaka scored poorly in almost all the vital indices that define a livable city. It has a public transport system which is hugely dysfunctional as it solely depends on roads. Its infrastructure facilities are poor; its supply of utilities inadequate and its crime rate alarming. Nothing short of a revolution can save the city and effectively put an end to the contradictions and ambiguities that beset it now. That revolution has to draw a new cognitive map of the city, a visionary design that will inspire policy planners, government functionaries, politicians, activists and private entrepreneurs to put their resources together to halt Dhaka's slide to disaster.

Kazi Khaleed Ashraf's *Designing Dhaka: A Manifesto for a Better City* which came out in 2012 offers such a stimulating and challenging design for Dhaka. It proposes a manifesto to bring healing to Dhaka, and solve its problems from the bottom up. He calls Dhaka 'a stubborn city,' 'a city of brutal facts' balancing itself unsteadily on six different

morphologies that define its urban fabric: the settlement along the Buriganga; the colonial spread of the city carving out a 'new Dhaka,' the post-1947 development of the city including its planned residential areas, the chaotic and unplanned growth of a jumble of infrastructure that stifled the planned city and the ubiquitous squatter colonies and slums define the city and give it its uniqueness. He picks up the essential properties of each morphology—which he sees as both a reality as well as a promise-- and collates them for an understanding of their essential character. What they have in common is a socio-spatial dialectic – more than physical structures – that should not be lost sight of in planning for cohesion and transcendence. 'A new Dhaka is possible,' he writes; 'It can truly be a modern city that is socially, economically and ecologically sustainable.' And then explains his grounds of optimism. 'Working with its geography and hydrology, and its growing urban needs,' he maintains, 'Dhaka can still be a very unique, green and highly livable city.'



Canal front Image by Ashraf.

Such an assumption rests on unsure grounds if it is not supported by two essential qualities of a city designer – 'daring' and 'vision.' Ashraf has both. In the subsequent pages of the book he explains what 'daring' implies and what design can do if it assumes a visionary dimension.

Designing Dhaka has a theory part and an action part. The theory part deals with an understanding of spatial ontology, the heterogeneous spaces and their relations, and explains the reasons behind Dhaka's cataclysmic urban growth. It also defines the city in civilizational terms, explaining how Dhaka, like all comparable cities, has become over the centuries 'an instrument of destiny.' Ashraf maintains that a city like Dhaka is an 'aggregate of economic and technical vectors' that policy makers and planners should take into account, but it is 'lived experience' that should take precedence. He indeed builds on the lived experience to formulate his vision. This is one reason why history is so important to him. In course of his journey through the history of the city he discovers when and where the feeling of place and civitas – civic enterprise – was lost and can be regained.

Another strong point Ashraf makes is that any design for Dhaka has to base itself on 'a liquid landscape' and how the plan has to be around land and water, without putting them in an antagonistic position.

The theory part of *Designing Dhaka* lays the ground of what cultural geographers describe as a 'critical-mass potential for innovation' and looks at space as culturally constructed instead of being a given. For a space-starved city like Dhaka, space has to be both material and representational. It has to be a triad of historicality, sociality and spatiality that constitutes human being. The theory part also alerts us to the need of emphasizing more on practices, strategies and interactions rather than on systems and structures.

The action part of *Designing Dhaka* begins with a 15 point manifesto for making a new Dhaka possible. Briefly stated, these are: urbanism, hydrology, peripheries, the city as an island, containing the city, mobility, housing, open spaces, pedestrian friendly streets, city governance, urban assets, new economy, energy and ecology, catalytic architecture and city of play. Each point is explained and supported by a wealth of information and a doable agenda. In planning the city, Ashraf maintains, urbanism, rather than urbanisation should be the focus, since 'urbanism is a visualisation of the soul of the city.' What he emphasizes is an evolutionary philosophy, a 'meditation on totality' which would take into account the past, the present and the future. If such a holistic approach is taken and sustained, it would be possible for designers to understand the essential chemistry of land and water and combine them to create a fluid city. A holistic approach should also take the designers from the core of the city to the edge in order to make a polycentric Dhaka and enclose the river within its living parameters.

Kazi Khaleed Ashraf's manifesto looks at Dhaka as a site where an urban revolution is possible. As architect Saif Ul Haque, another crusader for a new and better Dhaka, remarks in his prologue, 'All the tasks listed above are not of very complex nature, neither are they very difficult to implement but the question is how much are we willing to do it?' He then asks, 'And when do we begin?'

The right answer is: 'Yesterday'. ■

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Reasons to say 'Oh what a rotter of a Day!'

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

It may be as simple as the alarm going off and with you wondering why it's still so dark at 7am. Being the tech-savvy person that you are the alarm has been set at 3am with a screaming rendition of Deep Purple's 'Mistreated'

Apart from raising the dead along with most of the household, you will find that waking at that unsavoury hour is quite a test on not just your raw nerves but also your motor skills. Stubbing the toe against the bed is a common inconvenience of this hour as is feeling helpless because your throat is parched but there is no way in Hell that you are going to go all the way to the fridge to get water; this is party time for all kinds of beings - roaches, rats, robbers and raging ghosts - all lurking about waiting for the kill.

But there are other hurdles to cross. For insomniacs, being unceremoniously awakened is akin to breaking the silence in an orthodox monastery during prayer time - just not done. Once the eyelids lift it is very *very* difficult to get them to close - honestly that is. You could squeeze your eyes shut till your head throbs but sleep will not come. Instead, all the unpleasant things of life will replay themselves in excruciating detail: the look your wife gave you when you came home late only to realise that it was 'kancha bazar day' and she had been waiting for the last four hours for you to turn up; the way the words she spew out - 'inconsiderate', 'imbecile', 'fool' keep banging into your head...



No matter how hard you try not to 'think' at all, the more virulent will be the attack of negative thoughts -

Why did I have to ask the unexpected guest at the office, who did he think he was - the owner of the company which, most tragically, he was?

Did I have to be singing 'O Chikni Chameli..' and making suggestive moves just when my boss walked into the room?

Did I have to have the fourth chom chom, when my stomach was already making its objection known?

Am I really an imbecile?

By some miracle you may actually fall asleep - eventually- but alas happiness is so short-lived. It may seem like the cacophonous barking of a pack of rabid dogs that has so rudely brought you back to the conscious world. Actually it is the synchronicity of the morning call of the mistresses of several adjacent houses, including your own. It may be the wife, the mother, the mother in law or the divorcee living on her own and therefore declaring independence each and every day.

Surviving the ear-numbing ordeal there is the whole ritual of getting ready to take on the day. Of course there will be a turmeric stain on your last, clean shirt - discovered after you have meticulously ironed it. There will be only a trickle of water for a shower, you will have used aerosol insect spray instead of deodorant thus repelling both mosquitoes (plus point) and humans (could be a plus point) while making your armpits feel they are on fire. Traffic will naturally be extra charming, going at amoebic pace while you sweat it out in a bus with a flatulent passenger's posterior dangerously close to your perspiring face. If you are lucky you may pass out from the sheer anticipation of what may happen and the rest of the ride will be easy.

You will be an hour late for work, the day the boss wants to have an impromptu meeting about increasing efficiency. You will be held as an example of what the company frowns upon and all your insufferable rivals will smirk and snigger while you fumble and stumble to the last empty chair.

The day will keep beating on you relentlessly - piercing your self confidence with poison darts - until finally you reach that place - the cocoon of your bed. The spouse is mercifully asleep, the house is quiet, you are so exhausted that you enter slumberland within three seconds of hitting the pillow. You are in a green meadow, the air is so breezy, Katrina in a flaming red dress is feeding you cream puffs, when out of nowhere comes that old lament "I've been mistreated, I've been abused/I've been struck downhearted, baby, I've been confused" - your innermost feelings expressed by Deep Purple, followed by an unmentionable expletive from Sleeping Beauty next to you.