

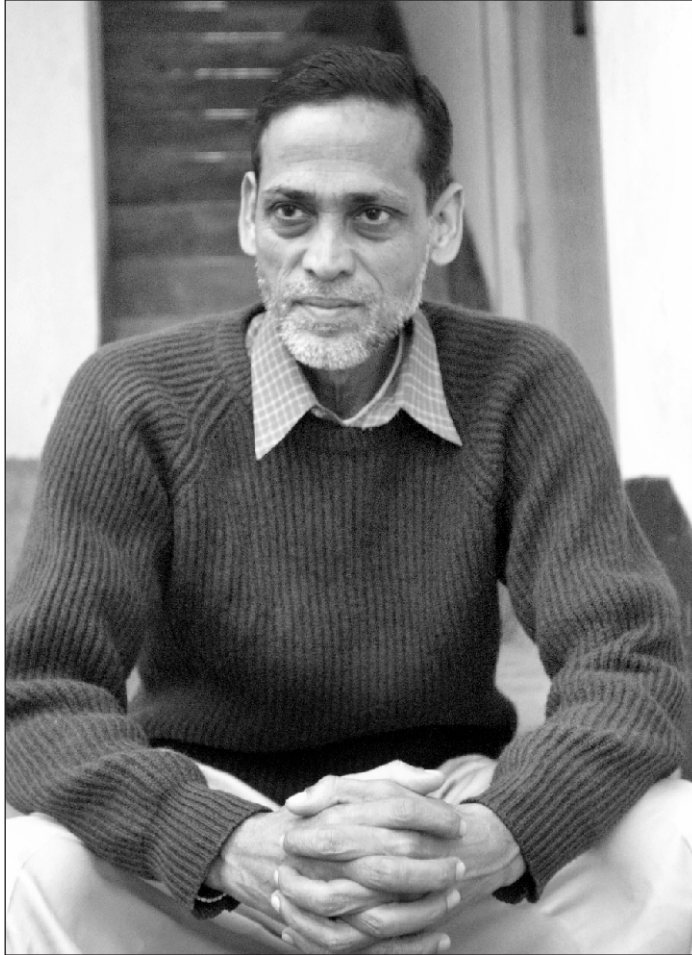
Azam Khan: Songs from a brave heart

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Azam Khan, the pop 'guru', went to the battlefield in 1971 with the dream of an independent Bangladesh in his eyes and music in his heart. That is the reason why he could sing while shooting the enemies with his three-not-three rifle during the war. Many of his friends and seniors in the battlefield had been amazed to see him singing and firing at the same time. Many of them asked Azam how could he do that. His reply was simple: It was possible only because of his equal love for motherland and music. "If death is in our fate we would definitely die. So why don't we keep singing and supplying food for our soul," said Azam Khan sitting at his Jasimuddin Road residence

in Dhaka. Can the history of Bangladesh be written without him? The answer is no. Azam Khan has contributed with all his means to make the country free. "When I asked my father for permission to join the war, he just asked me not to return without victory," he said. He joined the Liberation War when he was 21-year old. After his basic military training in Melaghar, he joined the frontier in Comilla. After a few weeks he was assigned to carry out guerilla operations, as a section commander under sector 2, inside Dhaka and its outskirts. Among these, 'Operation Titas' led by Azam is considered one of the most successful guerrilla

operations in Dhaka. He led the operation to destroy gas pipelines. At that time many small teams were running guerrilla operations in the city. Explaining the background of deciding to destroy the gas pipeline in Dhaka, he said that they wanted to stop the supply mainly to hotels like the then Hotel Intercontinental (now Dhaka Sheraton), Purbani International and a few more. "Our objective was to let the foreigners staying in these hotels know that a war was going on and Bangladesh were not sitting idle. We were very much in the battlefield. Interrupting gas supply was one of the ways do so," said Azam. "According to the plan me and my teammates Jinnah, Lablu, Khurshid, Taher,



Matin and many more went to Surulia in Demra where the gas pipeline of Titas has entered the city," said the legendary rock star while talking about 'Operation Titas'. The team carried a large number of explosives by two boats that we attached with the pipeline and the explosion afterwards resulted in complete destruction of the pipeline. "The explosion was so big that the night sky of entire Dhaka City brightened intimidating the Pakistan Army," said Azam. On their return one of the boats sank. The guerilla fighters had to cross more than one and a half kilometers swimming. Azam passed out after swimming such a long way. "When I regained consciousness it was

already morning and I found myself lying on a haystack," said the pop king. In the writings of many freedom fighters of sector 2 the gallantry and contribution of Azam Khan in the war is recognised. In an article Sadeque Hossain Khoka, mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation and a freedom fighter under sector 2, wrote: "The bravery of Azam Khan was unbelievable. His contribution in the guerrilla activities in Dhaka would never be forgotten." Khoka observed the freedom fighter Azam Khan very closely from the very beginning of the liberation war and both took part in many guerrilla operations together. "During the training in Melaghar his patriotic and other songs were great a

source of recreation and inspiration," wrote Khoka. Returning from the battlefield after victory he started his career in rock music and established himself as the pop guru of Bangladesh. Azam Khan, now 56 years old, literally means it when he says that his fight for the country is not over yet. Although his physical condition does not always allow him to attend public gatherings he still raises his voice against acid violence, drug abuse, HIV and many other issues to inspire the new generation. He still dreams Bangladesh to be a better country for living. "I still feel the urge to do something for the betterment of my country. I still do not know how I will do it but I will do it," said the pop guru.

Unfair fare hike ahead of Eid

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Hundreds of thousands of Dhaka dwellers are now preparing to leave the city for their villages to celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha with their near and dear ones. Huge rush for tickets of bus, train and launch was seen at every bus terminal, railway station and launch terminal with the transport companies struggling to manage the crowd. The passengers said tickets are not available while the inter-district transport companies said they have almost finished advance ticket selling for the outbound trips before Eid. According to the transport companies, Eid passengers will start leaving the city from Thursday, the last working day before Eid to be celebrated on January 1. Most of the inter-district bus operators had started selling advance tickets from December 20, said Golam Murshid Pintu, assistant general secretary of Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners Association. He said they are still experiencing huge rush for tickets. The bus owners displayed fare-charts of different routes at the ticket counters and opened complaint booths at the terminals so the passengers can complain about exorbitant fare.

Pintu said the bus operators would arrange extra trips to handle the pressure of crowd. The bus owners sat with the police administration on Monday to discuss security at the terminals. The meeting decided that additional police force will be deployed at the terminals to step up security and reduce traffic congestion. Farukuzzaman, working in a private company, is going to celebrate Eid at Madaripur with his family. He collected three tickets from Chandra Poribhan by paying extra money. He said that usually the fare varies between Tk 100 and Tk 120 but "Now I paid Tk 160 for each ticket." Mojibur Rahman, working in a daily newspaper said that he tried hard for a bus ticket to go to Betagi at Borguna and failed to get because of not paying extra money than the fare chart. Now he decided to go home by launch but here to he have to pay Tk 200 instead of Tk 160. Bangladesh Railway sold advance tickets from December 22 to 26. Ashok Kumar, manager of Kamalapur Railway Station, told Star City that the unsold tickets will be available at the station counters on the travelling day. This year the railway authorities have arranged a special train for Jamalpur route



Hundreds queue up at the Kamalapur Railway Station to buy tickets on the eve of Eid. and for other routes they will add extra coaches with every regular trips. The water transports also have finished booking of the cabins. The inter-district launch services sold advance tickets from December 20, said Badiuzzaman Badal, senior vice chairman of the Bangladesh Inland Waterways Passenger Carriers Association. "For handling the huge transport pressure, the launches will start for different destinations at evening and return to Dhaka in day time for more trips," he said.

No step yet to reduce

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A very few factories have the ETP but most of the industries are running without any regard for the environment. According to sources the defiant industrialists usually "plead poverty" to the authorities when the question of environment arises. A top official source quoted an industrialist and said, "They (the industrialists) would say that they are creating employment opportunities for a poor country like Bangladesh and also earning foreign currency so they deserve to be treated with more patience to install ETPs." The DoE official however said that they are planning to send the offending industries two notices to comply with the existing laws very soon. "If they do not abide by the laws then we will disconnect the utility services. This step is under process," said the official. In the absence of implementation of existing laws, Waste Concern is an NGO working in the city to introduce Environment Management System (EMS), in compliance with ISO 14000 mentioned in the government's

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Waste Concern officials believe that EMS could greatly help reduce industrial pollution. EMS is a systematic approach to deal with environmental aspects of an organisation. It is a tool that enables an organisation of any size and type to control the impact of its activities, products or services on environment. "EMS is a commitment to comply with relevant environment laws and regulations, to prevent pollution and its 'continual improvement'," said Iftekhar Enayetullah, director, Waste Concern adding that in the city up to 20 factories have adopted EMS. But the government is very slow to introduce EMS. "We are first emphasising on capacity building under Bangladesh Environment Institution Support Project (BEISP) for environment related issues including EMS. Then we will introduce EMS to industry owners and also to the officials of the DoE since it is a brand new concept here," said a DoE official seeking anonymity.

Fund constraint stalls

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"The main problem is transport expenditure for the exchange programme," said Fazlul Haque. Some zoos across the world want to exchange animals with Dhaka Zoo but they are not interested to pay transport costs for the animals. Fazlul Haque said:

"The other zoos would take our surplus animals but how can we bring animals from them as we don't have money for the transportation." Recently Dhaka Zoo got four new species from Kuwait Zoo as the Kuwait Zoo provided the entire transportation cost.

Advertising, Bank & Market Timing

AD AGENCIES	ART & CULTURAL CENTERS	BANKS	MARKET CLOSED				
Adcomm Ltd 9896600, 9887665 Asiatic Marketing Communication Ltd 9892768, 9893303 Bitopi Advertising 91141121, 91151121 Expressions Ltd 9562380, 9568326, 966481 Grey Advertising Bangladesh Ltd 8811541, 8827862, 9881689 Interface Communications 9362624, 8351148, Fax: 8314306 Interspeed Advertising 8810675, 9891859 Matra 8317456, 9331057, Fax: 9330556 Media Comm Ltd 8861521 (9 lines) Unitrend Ltd 9124380-4 A Positive Advertising Ltd 8856598-9, 8837751-2	Alliance Francaise De Dhaka 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka. Tel: 8611557 Bangla Academy Dhaka University Area, Dhaka. Tel: 8619577, 8619583, Fax: 8612352, Email: bacademy@citechco.net Bangladesh Shishu Academy Old High Court Road (Opp. Carzon Hall), Dhaka-1000; Tel: 9550317, 9564128 British Council 5, Fuller Road, Dhaka German Cultural Center House 10, Road 9, Dhanmondi, Dhaka Indian Cultural Center H-25, Road-96, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212 Nazrul Institute House 330B, Road 28 (Old),	Dhanmondi, Dhaka Tel: 9114500, Fax: 9118051, Email: nazrulin@citechco.net Russian Cultural Centre House-510, Road-7, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Tel: 81123115, Fax: 8113026, Email: ruscult@accessstel.net Shilpakala Academy Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000 Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts House 275/F, Road 27, Dhanmondi, Dhaka Cezanne Art Gallery UAE Motri Complex, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani Dhaka Drik Gallery House 58, Road 15A(New),	Dhanmondi, Dhaka Tel: 9120125, Fax: 9115044, Email: office@drik.net Gallery Chitrak House-21, Road-4, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka National Art Gallery Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000 Shilpa Rag House 15, Road 16, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Tel: 8117085, Fax: 8117085, Email: shilparg@vasdigital.com Shilpangan House-25, Road-5, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Tel: 8614246 Tivoli Art Gallery F/33, DCC Super Market (1st Floor) Gulshan-2 (North), Dhaka, Tel: 9895903	Agrani Bank 9566153-54, 956616069, 9566074-75 Bangladesh Bank 7126101-20, Fax: 9566212 BRAC Bank Ltd 8824051-4, Fax: 8813543 Citibank NA 9550060, Fax: 9562236 Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd 9568537-39, Fax: 9561889 Eastern Bank Ltd 9558390-1, Fax: 9562364 First Security Bank Limited 9562878, PABX: 9560229, Fax: 9561637 Grameen Bank 8011138, Fax: 8013559 Habib Bank Ltd	9555092, 9563043-5, Fax: 9561784 Islami Bank (Bangladesh) Ltd 95542402, 9563040, 9560099, Fax: 9564532 IFIC Bank Ltd 9563020, 9562060, Fax: 9562015 Jamuna Bank Ltd 9555141, 9570912-16, Fax: 9565762 Janata Bank 9560000, 9560027-30, Fax: 9564644 Mercantile Bank Limited 9559333, 9560329, Fax: 9561213 National Bank Ltd 9563081-5, Fax: 9563953 NCC Bank 9561902-4, Fax: 9566290 Premier Bank Ltd	8015276, 8811417 Prime Bank Ltd 9567265, 9562822, Fax: 9567230 Shahjalal Bank Ltd 9570812, 9567435, Fax: 9557413 South East Bank 9550081, 9551411, Fax: 9550093 Standard Chartered Bank Ltd 9550181, Fax: 9562332 Sonali Bank 9550426-34, Fax: 9561410 The City Bank Limited 9565925, Fax: 9562347 The Trust Bank Ltd 9871095, 9871074, 9888068, Fax: 4071094 Uttara Bank Ltd 9561438, 9551162-3, Fax: 8613529 United Commercial Bank Ltd 9561580, Fax: 88-02-9560587	Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday Elephant Road-Friday Bishal Center-Friday Baitual Mukarram Market-Friday Polwell Market-Friday BCS Computer City-Friday Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday Stadium Market-Friday Bangabazar Market-Friday National Museum-Thursday Ahsan Manzil-Thursday New Market-Tuesday Gausia Market-Tuesday Mouchak Market-Sunday Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday Eastern Plaza-Sunday Farmview Super Market-Sunday Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday Dhaka Zoo-Sunday Shishu Jadughar-Sunday