

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Technology Wins over Tradition

by Sabah Chowdhury

The ancient lane of Shankhari Bazar, once the focal point of Dhaka's rich heritage in crafts has quietly changed without anybody noticing it. The narrow lanes, the tall rickety buildings, on the face it, is the same but from inside the Shankhari Bazar is hardly that any more.

Shankha (conch shell) was the raw material from which hundreds of artisans fashioned bangles and which testified to the state of marriage for a Bengali Hindu woman. Tradition dictated that she could not take it off so long her husband was alive. In fact so profound is the influence of this practice, that many Bengali women, Hindu and Muslim or whatever will not have bare unadorned wrists fearing for her husband's life. It was not just a symbol of marriage but an antidote against widowhood as well. That kind of belief helped in creating a lot of work for the residents of Shankhari Bazar, and for generations the trade continued handed down from father to son.

A large population was sustained in this 'patti'-a ghetto for all that connotes — which became the target of the Pakistani army's genocide programme. For a few months in 1971, the area was deserted, but soon after victory in December, it has thrived again. It seemed that bullets couldn't halt the apparently indestructible Conch Shell Lane. But what bullets were unable to do, technology did. Today a handful of families are at work with conch. They not only provide marriage talismans but cater to the tourist's appetite for souvenirs and local nicknacks as well. The people are there, the product too, but the artisanship has changed for good.

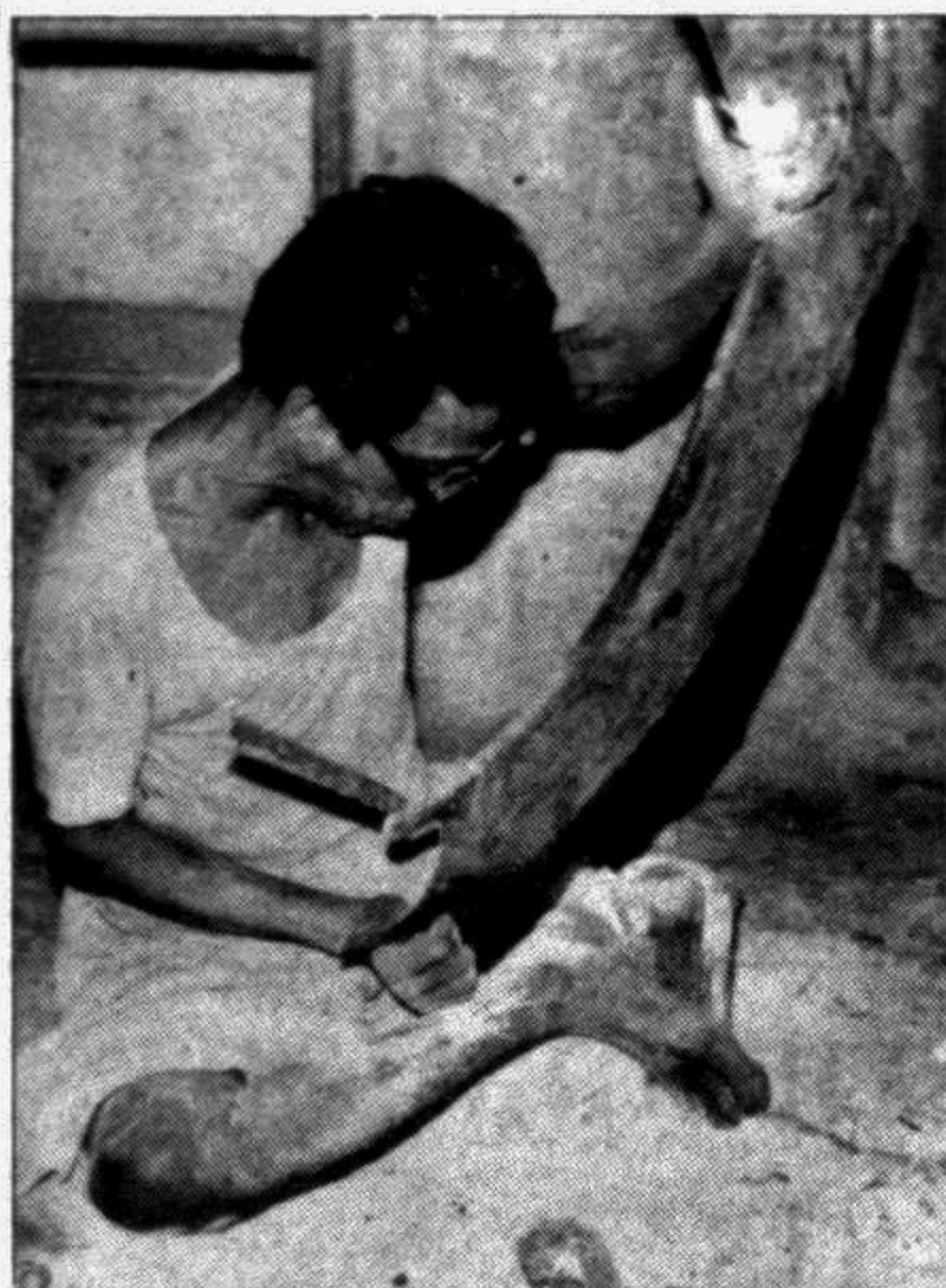
The conch shell saw which was synonymous with the trade, and which has travelled to a poignant Bengali proverb, has suddenly become a piece of obsolete technology. Modern mechanised saws and drills have replaced the

traditional crescent-shaped hand saw. Those who can afford the machine now produce more and better products. The laws of market began to operate, and those with the mechanical saws leaped the chasm and made it. At its height, over 142 houses practically all the residents, were part of the conch shell industry. But in the last few years it has gone on a slumping course and not more than half-a-dozen houses or families are now making conch shell things.

Others have been wiped out, taking to different means of livelihood for survival. Among those who had a hand in changing Shankhari Bazar is Probesh Kumar Shor. He and a few others banded together and approached BSIC for a loan to import mechanised saws.

Naturally resistance grew and a mini Luddite movement took place. But such movements have a tendency to fail against the onslaught of technology, and this was no different. The mechanised saw not only could produce more but a variety of stuff as well. Soon orders started to pour in from the fashionable handicrafts and souvenir shops of Dhaka like Aarong, Karika, Shetuli etc. Now the artisans have branched out into ladies jewellery, as well as decoration pieces, leaving bangles far behind. Technology has secularized the ancient profession.

Outwardly, the distinct colour and the squalor of Shankhari Bazar is holding on. The narrow tall buildings which had always managed to survive on faith alone defying laws of gravity and architecture were the product of this trade. The irony of it all is that progress and development, so prayed for, has arrived but in the process has thrown a long and rich tradition away.



An artisan at work. Photo: Enamul Haque

Hasina gets 26 golden boats

ON BOARD F.T. SHAH PARAN, Feb 14: Awami League chief and eight-party alliance leader Sheikh Hasina said yesterday, that the boat, the popular traditional symbol of the Bengali people was in full sail much ahead of February 27 polls, reports BSS.

Talking to the newsmen on board the Nagarbari-Archa ferry on way back to the capital from a hectic five-day electioneering in the northern districts Sheikh Hasina said, the boat was capable of moving equally in rough and fair weather with people at the helms. "Inshallah, this time the boat will register a landslide victory on the way to its

destination", she added. During her visit to the northern districts she addressed 210 public meetings and wayside gatherings. She travelled 1,620 kilometres covering 40 constituencies of the greater Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra and Pabna districts.

She was given rousing ovations by the rural people who showered floral petals, rose water and chanted slogans wishing her party's victory in the coming elections. In the remote villages, hundreds of people — men, women and children ran

fast the meandering alleys in the open meadow to have a glimpse of their beloved leader.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Wooden pin
- 4 Around
- 6 "The Emperor"
- 12 Period of time
- 13 Rabbit
- 14 Peruvian
- 15 Indian
- 17 Deer's horn
- 19 Early morn
- 20 Out of meat
- 21 Lubricate
- 22 Before: prefix
- 23 Reward
- 25 Morsel
- 26 Gold symbol
- 27 Go astray
- 28 Health resort
- 29 Kevin Bacon film
- 32 XVII x III
- 33 Colonizes
- 35 Tellurium

DOWN

- 1 Edible seed
- 2 Sea eagle
- 3 Collect: assemble
- 4 Pronoun
- 5 Audience
- 6 Teutonic deity
- 7 Earn
- 8 Cover
- 9 Article
- 10 Cicatrix
- 11 Domesticated
- 16 Young boy
- 18 Spanish article
- 21 Speech
- 22 Play on words
- 23 Pinchlike term
- 24 Great Lake
- 25 Choose
- 26 Three-toed sloth
- 28 Deposit
- 29 Lair
- 30 Kind of collar
- 31 Lease
- 33 "— of Paleface"
- 34 Parcel of land
- 37 Fruit seed
- 38 Lose freshness
- 41 Instructor
- 42 Encountered
- 43 "Death"
- 44 Jot
- 45 Greek letter
- 46 Bundle
- 48 Native metal
- 49 Obese
- 50 Summer: Fr.
- 51 Knock
- 53 Near
- 55 Concerning

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	E	T	D	E	N	S	E
A	P	E	E	L	I	T	E
T	I	L	L	S	B	O	R
L	E	I	S	P	I	E	
A	S	S	E	R	T	S	
R	E	A	P	S			
G	A	G	D	R	I	P	
U	T	A	H	S	T	A	
E	S	S	E	D			
C	O	N	D	O	R	S	
A	B	E	M	E	E	S	
P	I	T	S	T	A	I	

Dhaka shocked at killing of Iraqi civilians

Bangladesh Thursday expressed shock at the reports of casualties and deaths of civilians in Baghdad due to bombings, reports UNB.

A Foreign Office spokesman expressing the reaction told UNB, Bangladesh wants liberation of Kuwait and not destruction of Iraq.

The spokesman reiterated the country's call "for avoiding civilian targets by all sides."

Bangladesh stands for implementation of the UN resolutions seeking withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and restoration of the legitimate government of the tiny Sheikdom.

Responding to a question on the outcome of the NAM meeting in Belgrade Tuesday, the spokesman said, "Bangladesh always supports move for a peaceful solution of the problem".

Hasina's 6-day election tour

Awami League president and leader of the 8-party Alliance Sheikh Hasina leaves for south and south-western districts today (Friday) on a six-day election campaign, reports UNB.

Hasina will start her journey this morning by Mawa road.

During her tour, she will address a series of public meetings and wayside gatherings in the districts of Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Barisal, Jhalakathi and Pirojpur.

The Awami League chief will address rallies at Shaibchar, Srinagar, Mawa Ghat on February 15, Bhanga, Madaripur, Kalkini, Gournadi and Uzirpur on February 16, Banaripara, Swarupkathi, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, on February 17, Gopalganj and Tungipara on February 18, Molahat, Kotlipara and Bhangarhat on February 19 and Alamdanga, Boalmari, Nagarkanda and Rajbari on February 20.

She is expected to return to the capital on February 20.

Anniversary of Asaf-ud-Dowla's death today

The 8th death anniversary of Mohammad Asaf-ud-Dowla, formerly Executive Editor of daily Ittefaq and founder of weekly Spastabadi, will be held today (Friday) according to a Press release, reports BSS.

Day-long Quran Khwani at the grave of Mr. Dowla, milad mahfil and feeding the poor have been arranged on the occasion at Chandaikona in Bogra.

Enayet Karim A milad mahfil will be held to observe the 17th death anniversary of Mr. Enayet Karim, a former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, on February 16 at House No.16, Lane 2, Shyamali after Asar prayers, reports BSS.

Mrs. Hosne Ara Karim has requested friends, relations and well wishers to attend the milad.

Discussion

Motijheel night school teachers and students on Thursday held a discussion meeting on late Md. Asaf Ud-doula Reza, Executive Editor of the Daily Ittefaq, says a press release.

Headmaster of the school Mr. Mesbah Uddin Sabu presided over the meeting.

The meeting was addressed among others, by Director of Apex Mr. Rahmat Ullah, Assistant Headmaster Md. Iqbal, Mintu, Kazzal and Shahjahan.

Weather

Temperature may fall a little

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather is likely to prevail today. Night temperature fell by two to three degrees Celsius at most places on Wednesday and may fall by one to three degree Celsius on Friday night, according to a Met Office.

The lowest temperature in Dhaka was 16.7 degree Celsius while the country's lowest was 10.3 degree Celsius at Ishardi. The sun sets today (Friday) at 5.54 pm and rises Saturday at 6.32 am.

Outlook for subsequent two days: little change.

Extended outlook for another five days: bad weather expected by end of period.

Temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns are:

Cities and towns	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity %
	Max	Min
Dhaka	28.2	16.7
Chittagong	29.4	20
Bogra	27.8	13.5
Rangpur	27.3	12
Cox's Bazar	31	21
Sylhet	26.8	15.5
Rajshahi	29.6	11.5
Hong Kong	20° C	
Karachi	15° C	
Beijing	1° C	
Bombay	18° C	
Calcutta	17° C	
Colombo	22° C	
Bangkok	24° C	



A group of Dhaka University female students in colourful saris and palms balm with 'mehedi' celebrating on Thursday the advent of Spring, the king of all seasons. — Star Photo

Advent of spring celebrated in city

Thursday was the Pehela Phalgun, heralding the advent of spring, the king of the season, reports BSS.

Air was laden with the fragrance of flowers, and the chirping of birds as the dawn broke yesterday.

With the coming of spring, people welcome the new season in the villages and urban areas.

In the capital city, the women students in Dhaka University and the book fair at Bangla Academy moved about clad in Basanti saree and mehedhi in their hands to welcome the day.

Male students, literary and cultural activists and young people were found in 'panjabi' and 'pajama'.

Phalgun is remarkable to us for another reason. On the 8th Phalgun 39 years ago our valiant sons of the golden soil, Salam, Barka, Jabbar, Rafiq, established Bangla one of the state languages of the then Pakistan embracing martyrdom.

This year Phalgun has come to the nation with immense significance as the parliamentary elections are set to be held on February 27

with promises for setting up a democratic government, the cherished dream of the 11 crore people.

The recovered arms were five pistols, two revolvers and five pipeguns while the bullets were of 303 and 7.62 rifles.

Firearms recovered at Keraniganj

By Staff Correspondent

A special police squad recovered 12 firearms and three rounds of rifle bullet after raiding six villages of Keraniganj thana in the city in the early hours on Thursday.

The body was sent to Mitford Hospital and a case was filed with Demra Police.

Child killed in road mishap

SSMCH Correspondent

A girl was crushed under the wheel of a bus at Razar Bag near Bishwa road, Thursday.

Kulsam (6) made accident while she was crossing the road.

The body was sent to Mitford Hospital and a case was filed with Demra Police.

Nirmal Sen blasts BSP stand

The First Secretary of Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal

Comrade Nirmal Sen Thursday called for a solution to the problems created with the newspaper employees Wage Board following the "unexpected role" of the caretaker Government on the issue of the journalists, reports BSS.

In a press statement Mr. Sen an Assistant Editor of Dainik Bangla, said the only solution of the problems was to allow the Wage Board take its own lawful and normal course. The unnecessary interference and unwanted controversy on the issue would rather aggravate the situation, he added.

Mr. Nirmal Sen criticised the Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP) stand on the issue saying that the BSP has always played the same "opportunistic" role since the inception of the Wage Board.

Ershad must be sent to jail: Dr Kamal

Awami League and 8-party Alliance leader Dr Kamal Hossain called upon the authorities for immediate shifting of deposed President Hussain Muhammad Ershad to jail, reports UNB.

He was speaking as special guest at the opening session of the National Homeopathic Grand conference 1991 at the Engineers' Institute in the city on Thursday morning.

The inaugural session was presided over by former Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, Prof. Abdul Mannan while National Professor Dr Nurul Islam was the chief guest.

Among others, Advocate Shamsul Huq Chowdhury, Khabar Editor Mizanur Rahman Mizan, BFWJ President Reazuddin Ahmed, and journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury were also present as special guests.

"It must be answered why Ershad is being kept in a posh Gulshan house instead of being sent to jail, despite the fact that he is accused in three criminal cases," Dr Kamal said. He also said that it was violation of Article 23 of the Constitution.

Dr Kamal, also the President of Supreme Court

Bar Association, demanded trial and punishment of Ershad and his accomplices according to law.

He said during Ershad's rule, the annual expenditure in the health sector was minimum whereas huge amounts were spent for unproductive purposes in a country inhabited by majority living under abject poverty and deprivation.

Kamal warned that the enemies of democracy had again raised their heads with black money and arms to foil the victory of the people.

He assured that the future democratically elected government would take steps for solving the problems of Homeopaths and improvement in the health sector in general.

Chief guest Prof Nurul Islam in his speech said Homeopathy had already been recognised throughout the world as a cheap and effective means of treatment and stressed on its parallel growth in the country.

Leaders of Homeo Peshajibi Samity, Homeo Medical Chhatra Oikya Parishad and Homeopathic Medicine Manufacturers' Association, Dr Mosharraf Hossain, Dr M A Baten, and Amanullah Ziku also spoke on the occasion.

Revolver recovered from Zahurul Huq Hall VP

The Dhaka University Syndicate on Wednesday expressed resentment and strongly condemned the physical attack on the Provost of Zahurul Huq Hall, Prof. Mansur Musa, and terrorist activities centering a revolver recovered from the possession of the Vice President of the hall, reports BSS.

According to a DU Press release, the Syndicate at a meeting also adopted a resolution reiterating its call to the law-enforcing agencies to free the campus from arms.

The Syndicate constituted a five-member committee headed by the Dean of the Faculty of Law to probe the in-

cidents of February 11 when Prof. Mansur Musa was attacked physically during his night inspection. The Syndicate also discussed the snatching away of the revolver from the table of the Vice Chancellor which was recovered from the possession of the Zahurul Huq Hall's Vice President.

The Press release said, the Syndicate discussed the written statements of the Provost, decisions of the Provost Committee, the resolutions accepted by the Teachers' Association and moved by its President and the Syndicate member, Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury.

64 lakhs to get free bidis, cigarettes during polls

Bangladesh peace and Development Mission (BPDm) on Thursday called for preventing free distribution of bidi and cigarettes in election campaigns and to observe No-Tobacco Day on February 27, reports UNB.

The BPDm President Kazi Nazrul Islam addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club said about fresh 64 lakhs of people will be addicted to smoking following the free distribution of bidi and cigarettes during the polls.

He said more alarming would be that, in future about new one lakh youth will be addicted to other drugs after being addicted to smoking.

Islami Andolan's discussion meet

Bangladesh Islami Andolon organised a discussion on "war in the Middle East and peace in the Gulf Area" Thursday.

Professor Dr. Sekander Ali of Rajshahi University and Gulshan Abdul Hye, Senior Assistant Editor of the Daily Meilatt were Chief guest and special guest respectively.

Major (Retd) Zainul Abedin Khan, President of the Andolon presided.

PROGRAMME

Rose festival

The rose festival '91 will be held at the premises of Dhanmohi Women's Sports Complex at 9 a.m. today (Friday).

Prof. M. Maniruzzaman Miah, the Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, will inaugurate the festival as the chief guest. President of the National Rose Society (Brig. Retd.) Atiq-ur-Rahman will preside.

Ekushey-reunion

A reunion of the participants in the historic Language Movement of 1952 will be held on February 17 at the Dhaka Medical College premises.

Poet Begum Sufia Kamal will attend the function as the chief guest while Health Adviser, Dr. M. A. Majed and Food and Culture Adviser Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed will be special guests.

Minorities meet tomorrow

Dhaka city conference of Bangladesh Hindu, Bhuddist, Christian Oikya Parishad will be held at Engineers Institute, tomorrow (Saturday) at 3 p.m. said a press release.

National seminar on AIDS

The Health Directorate will organise a national seminar on AIDS Prevention and Control at the NIPSON auditorium at Mahakhali in Dhaka on Sunday, says a Press release.

Education Adviser Prof Zil-lur Rahman Siddiqui will attend the function as chief guest while Additional Secretary of Health Ministry Prof K.M. Fariduddin will be special guest.

Dr. ANA Abeyesundere WHO Representative, Prof AK Sham-suddin Siddiquey, Director, Hospital & Clinics and AIDS Focal Point, Geas Kamal Chowdhury, Maj Gen MR Chowdhury, Commandant, AFIP&T, Prof MAT Siddique, DG, Health Services and Md. Nazrul Islam, Chief, Bureau of Health Education will speak on the occasion.

Teachers seek arms recovery

The Combined Teachers Movement at a meeting held at the Student-Teacher Centre in Dhaka on Thursday suggested several measures for holding free and fair parliamentary elections, reports BSS.

Presided over by Dr. Anwarullah Chowdhury, President, Dhaka University Teachers' Association and one of the conveners of the movement, the meeting, in a resolution, called for recovery of illegal arms and arrest of armed masters and miscreants.



The Theatre, a cultural group from Arambagh staging a musical drama at the Central Shaheed Minar premises on Thursday in commemoration of the language martyrs. — Star Photo