

Dhaka Day by Day

The Peddler With Marvellous Merchandise

By Raffat Binte Rashid

Omar Farook Sarkar is an unusual entrepreneur, he sells jeans, trousers for only Tk 8 to 30, shoes, sandals for Tk 10 to 20 and shirts just for Tk five.

Yet he is not quite following 'Oshin's' strategy of selling fish, at the lowest possible price or free. Instead this is the maximum price he could ask from his kind of customers.

He sells old clothes in the city slum areas. His customers are mostly the deprived children of this city whose parents are either day-labourers, house maids or without jobs. Their fantasies are made real by Omar Farook.

"It is beyond one's imagination to visualize the satisfaction and pride in the eyes of these children, when they are able to afford a jeans", said Omar Farook. "I remember in particular a boy of six years, whom I sold a faded jeans. His mother was not at all willing to spend Tk 15 on some luxury like this, and after lot of coaxing and bargaining we settled for Tk 8. His was the happiest face I ever saw. Immediately he ran to show off his first trousers to his friends and neighbours. In fact selling clothes to such boys and girls makes me feel great."

Omar Farook Sarkar is actually a tailor. He lives in Chankharpoel, Nuntoli with his sewing machine. Sounds weird, but actually he has no near ones in Dhaka city, the sewing machine is his only companion. He rents no house here and lives by the roadside. He eats his meals in the hotels and sleeps literally on his sewing machine.

He purchases old tattered second hand clothes from Begum Bazaar or Shadar Ghat and sometimes from peddlers selling house-hold utensils in exchange of old clothes and shoes. At night he sits with these huge mass of shirts, trousers, coats to fix up the holes and loops or loose buttons. During the day he sells these clothes to the people living in various slums of the city.

"My working area is in fact the whole of Dhaka city. Every day I walk through different roads and streets of the city from Kawan Bazaar to Milkhet to Shahbagh to Chawk Bazaar to Siddique Bazar, to sell my merchandise," he said. Omar Farook has the confident look, which

many other big entrepreneur in the garments business lack. He has an ever-smiling face, a casual, mellifluous manner of speaking as if no one is as happy and satisfied as him.

"My family which consists of six children and two wives is in Comilla near Meghna. I've been in Dhaka and working in this profession for the past 22 years. Before the Liberation War

I worked as a day-labourer, in a thread factory, which paid me very little. I left the factory work after War for this business. Occasionally I do tailoring jobs but mostly I sell secondhand clothes to people who cannot afford luxuries."

Omar Farook, wearing a torn coat and a *tupl* himself, in this hot, humid weather (which seemed to have no effect on his enthusiasm) said, "My daily earnings vary from Tk 100 to 150 and at the end of the month I am able to send home Tk 1000 to 1200. All

my sons are going to school, my eldest born, has now reached a marriageable age, he is in eighth grade."

When asked if he wants his sons to help him, he said "This is my seasonal business. Every alternate month I go back to my village to look after my lands there. I have few acres of paddy fields where I cultivate *Irri*, *Aman* and others crops. My sons help me there. After all supporting two families with a few pieces of crop-land is not a matter of joke," he volunteered laughingly.

"During the harvest time I employ extra help. I carry on quite well after selling and keeping paddy for my families," he said. "But selling clothes has now become an old and hard habit to break with. Now I cannot give up and few extra bucks are always handy. Moreover I hate to sit lazy, doing nothing with my youth and intelligence."

This versatile man with an easy go-lucky attitude towards life is in fact 50 years old, he has completed his primary education from Moricha Kandi High School. He sincerely believes that 'one should never sit idle', and in this city there are thousand and one ways to find work, I believe "God help those who help themselves."



Turkish Ambassador Ahmet Ermisoglu made a farewell call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. —PID photo

24,105 Rohingyas repatriated so far

The visiting United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Dr Sadako Ogata called on Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury at his secretariat office yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting, they discussed quick, safe and voluntary repatriation of Rohingyas refugees.

The Home Minister said that a total number of 2,50,877 refugees took shelter in Bangladesh from October '91 to July '92. Only 24,105 refugees have so far been repatriated voluntarily till May 11.

Matin said majority of the refugees are now willing to return to Myanmar, but some vested elements opposing it and creating problems. He emphasised the need for formulating a time schedule for completion of repatriation of the Rohingyas refugees.

Lauding the role of local people for giving shelter to Rohingyas refugees, the UN High Commissioner said UNHCR involvement in repatriation would expedite repatriation and facilitate their safe

and voluntary return. Describing the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as very significant both Dr Ogata and Matin hoped that this would help solve the problem.

Home Secretary Azmuddin Ahmed, the chief of the UNHCR mission in Dhaka, D Bayandor and other concerned officials were present.

Dr Sadako Ogata also called on Communications Minister Oli Ahmad at his official residence here yesterday.

They discussed details of peaceful and smooth repatriation of Myanmar refugees from Bangladesh.

Oli Ahmad expressed optimism that the broad based Memorandum of Understanding would help expedite the immediate repatriation of the Myanmar refugees.

He apprised Dr Sadako Ogata of socio-economic and environmental effects due to influx of Myanmar refugees and their continued presence in the area.

Outgoing Turkish envoy meets PM

The outgoing Turkish ambassador in Dhaka Ahmet Ermisoglu yesterday paid a farewell call on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office and expressed the hope that the existing friendly relations between Bangladesh and Turkey would be strengthened in the years to come, reports BSS.

The ambassador told the Prime Minister that he had witnessed many positive changes that took place in various fields in the past few years. He thanked Begum Zia for her government's cooperation during his tenure in Bangladesh.

Begum Zia described the relationship between Bangladesh and Turkey as excellent and said two brotherly Muslim countries have similarity in both cultural and religious fields.

She recalled her visit with Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman to Turkey.

The Prime Minister expressed her grief at the death of Turkish President Turgut Ozal and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

72 pc of export target achieved in 9 months

The country achieved 71.61 per cent of the export target of 2,500 million US dollars or Tk 9,750 crore in the first nine months of the current fiscal year (1992-93), Commerce Minister MK Anwar told parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

The achievement is 25 per cent more than that of the last fiscal year (1991-92), he said replying to Shah Mohammad Rafiqul Bari Chowdhury of Jatiya Party.

The minister told Mantrul Huq Chowdhury of JP that the country earned 930.72 million US dollars (Tk 3603.75 crore) by exporting readymade garments till March this year.

A total of 1,064 US dollars equivalent to Tk 4,055.67 crore was earned from this sector in fiscal 1991-92, he said.

The country earned a total of 4,791.02 million US dollars or Tk 16,677.96 crore by exporting garments in nine years since 1984-85.

Replying to a question from

Prof Abdul Mannan of Awami League, M K Anwar said food-stuff worth Tk 101.87 was imported from India in fiscal 1991-92.

The Commerce Minister told Khademul Islam (AI) that the government plans to import sugar in the public sector but the quantum will be determined considering the requirement.

Dr Freeman visits IUB

Dr GH Freeman of statistical consultancy unit of Warwick University visited Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) Wednesday, reports BSS.

Dr Freeman is a member of a visiting ODA Mission assessing capability and needs of Bangladesh universities in statistical service and computer training. He met the president, vice president and heads of inter faculty programmes in communication and environment management of IUB.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Prof. Dr. Hasan Mohammad Khan has shifted his chamber to the following address.
New address of the Chamber :-
CITY SKIN CENTRE
11, NEW BAILY ROAD (1st Floor),
DHAKA-1000.
(Opposite to Baitul Abedin Market and beside Chomchom sweet shop to the Western side of Shantinagar Chou-Rasta)
Tel.No:-401205 (Cham.) & 403818 (Res.)

50 Painters Exhibition

SHILPANGAN
THE CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY
FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Opening : 14 May 1993 Friday at 4-15 P.M.
Road No. 4, House No. 15 (New) Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka

\$ 62.149m received for cyclone-hit people

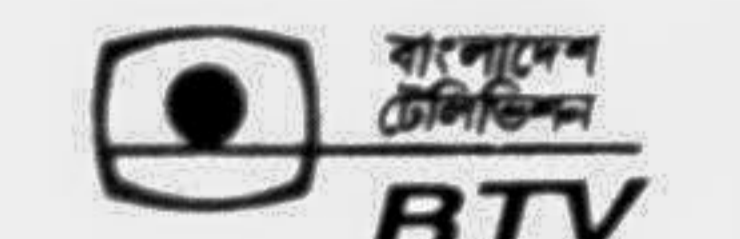
The country received 62.149 million US dollars in cash from different foreign countries and donor agencies for the people affected by the cyclone and tidal bore in April, 1991, reports UNB.

State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman said this yesterday in parliament responding to Abdul Awal Mia of Awami League.

According to a break-up produced in the House, the following relief goods and cash money were received during the period from April 1, 1991 to March 31, 1993. Wheat — 213 metric tons, rice — 31,214 metric tons, seed — 160 metric tons, cement — 80 metric tons.

Mahbubul Alam visits cyclone affected areas

Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Mahbubul Alam Tara on Wednesday visited the cyclone affected areas of Sonagazi in Feni district and attended the Namaz-e-Janaza for the students killed in the cyclone, reports BSS.



Friday

Morning session

- 8:00 Opening announcement
- 8:05 Al-Quran
- 8:10 Programmatic summary
- 8:15 News in Bangla
- 8:20 Alore Dishart
- 8:40 Natun Kur
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:05 Moneer Mukuray
- 10:10 Shikha Deskhia
- 11:15 Film show: Dany Wilson's Family Collection

Evening session

- 3:00 Opening announcement
- 3:05 Al-Quran
- 3:10 Programmatic summary
- 3:15 Cartoon film: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 3:40 Movie of the week: Full length English film: The Whereabouts of Jerry
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 7:25 Malancha
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:30 Comedy show: Perfect strangers
- 9:00 Magazine: Antaranaj
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Drama series: L A Law
- 11:30 Khabar/The News
- 11:40 Tomorrow's programme summary
- 11:45 Closing

What's on today . . .

Shilpangan Art Gallery

A fifteen-day art exhibition of contemporary artists will begin today (Friday) at 4-15 pm at the Shilpangan Art Gallery at Dhanmondi.

Prof Mohammad Kibria will inaugurate the exhibition as the chief guest while Dr Anisuzzaman will preside over the inaugural ceremony.

The exhibition will remain open everyday from 10 am to 8 pm till May 26.

Painting exhibition

A two-week long painting exhibition by Asif Bahauddin Sikder and Carol Sprengle will start today (Friday) at 5.00 pm at the gallery of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi.

Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University, will inaugurate the exhibition while Lee Coldren, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy, will be present as the chief guest.

The exhibition will remain open everyday except Saturday from 3.30 pm to 8.00 pm.

Workshop on 'Pharmaceutical practices'

A three-day workshop on 'Pharmaceutical practices' will begin today (Friday) at 9-30 am at the Hotel Sonargaon under the auspices of Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society.

Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare Sirajul Huq will attend the inaugural function as chief guest while Representative of WHO in Bangladesh ANA Abeyesundere and Country Representative of UNICEF RC Carriere will be present as the special guests.

Theatre Unit

A drama Akal Darshan based on a short story written by Shawkat Ali will be staged today (Friday) at the Guide House auditorium at 11 am by the Theatre Unit.

The drama is directed by A Gani Khokon.

Weather

No change in temperature

By Staff Correspondent

Weather forecast for the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Friday) says, rain or shower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at many places over the divisions of Dhaka, Chittagong, and Barisal and at a few places over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions with moderately heavy falls at many places elsewhere over the country.

The Met office forecasts, day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged.

The maximum temperature of the country yesterday (Thursday) of 38.7 degree Celsius was reported from Rajshahi and the minimum of 19.3 degree from Rangamati.

The amounts of rainfall recorded in 12 hours from 6 am to 6 pm yesterday across the country were: Comilla-54mm, Dhaka-40mm, Feni-32mm, Sandwip-19mm, Sitakund-7mm, Srimangal-10mm, Barisal-6mm, Bhola and Rajshahi 2 mm each and Sylhet-4mm.

The sun sets today(Friday) at 6.33 pm and rises tomorrow (Saturday) at 5.16 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	31.8	20.8	83	82
Chittagong	33.8	20.0	68	80
Rajshahi	38.7	26.8	90	73
Khulna	34.2	22.7	78	74
Barisal	33.0	25.8	86	97
Cox's Bazar	31.8	21.5	65	64
Srimangal	27.2	20.4	90	81
Dinajpur	31.2	23.7	80	83

