

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Magical Aspiration

by Raffat Binte Rashid



Silence reigned supreme everywhere — on the stage and among the spectators.

Shameer is specially tense and has kept his fingers crossed. His fiancée is lying hypnotized, sharp blades cutting straight through her stomach. Her body separated in two boxes. Everyone looked on with rapt attention holding their breath. Then with few *Abra Ka Dabrus* or *mantras*, the body was joined. The girl stepped out of the box safe and sound, and everyone could breathe freely again.

It was only a magician's job and a daring one too. Indeed, this is their favourite performance and for Shiraj Mia, a local magician, this takes him 20 minutes. A little twist of science mixed with tricks goes into its making.

Professionally, Shiraj is a driver employed with the Swedish Embassy, but already his hobby or rather his first passion — magic, has earned him quite a fame both at home and abroad. While still a kid, all kinds of stories about the exotic, romantic and mysterious Kamrupkamakhya drove him as far as that place in Assam to take magic lessons. Unfortunately his one-month stay there was in vain as he could not come across any *guru* there. He found, to his utter dismay, only witchcraft and voodoo practitioners. But bad luck could not make a dent into his determination. His unusual drive and attraction for this supernatural knowledge took him to Calcutta, precisely at the Victoria Memorial. There he met magician Azam Khan and was finally inducted to his apprenticeship.

From simple card tricks to gruesome snake eating and stone gulping, he learned almost 30 tricks in 3 months' time. Today he can perform 125 items perfectly. Mostly, he learned these skills by reading books and constant practise. Moreover, he was also an apprentice to magician A M Haq in Dhaka. As his most favourite pupil, he was able to learn more than others. Incidentally, famous magician Shah Moni was also a senior apprentice to Haq. Shiraj with M R Harun Shahmon, on many occasions demonstrated stage shows regularly

since 1973. He also performed in Bombay, Calcutta, Saudi Arabia and many other great cities.

The most dangerous trick that he ever learned was the snake eating one. "This is a very dangerous item because chances are, that while you are learning, you might even die," he said. Explaining the action, which he prefers not to perform at all, he said "It took me six months to learn just how to keep the plastic sack inside my throat without throwing up." Actually with the sack placed properly inside the throat the magician slowly shows as if he is chewing the snake, which in reality is being very skillfully dropped inside the plastic bag. Then he drinks water, as we usually do after a great meal, which actually gives the snake the liquid medium it prefers. Ultimately, he then hiccups the snake back. Quite an awful trick but very much in demand among the magic fans, Shiraj described.

Once interested in circus, Shiraj has now six apprentices. With an ever smiling face, he is the leader of his group of 10 members. For show lasting half an hour, he charges Tk 500 — the amount peaking upto Tk 5000 for a three-hour show. But it all depends on the duration and of course the trick performed. He sometimes charges as high as Tk 10,000. He prefers to dress colourfully almost like *Shahenshas* (Kings) only to attract his spectators.

Magic, which requires great concentration and attention is also a hobby for his youngest son. He is also the youngest member of Shiraj's team. The volition in him and inquisitiveness brought him to where he is now, but despite all his efforts he failed to avail himself of a chance to take part in Bangladesh Television. This for him, is no reason to give up the attempt, or be frustrated; in fact, he looks forward to a brighter future.

He is a fan of many famous foreign magicians but declares Jewel Aich, at home, to be his favourite and heaving a sigh he tries to be confidential — if only he could find a few opportunities like him.

## Two killed in separate road mishaps

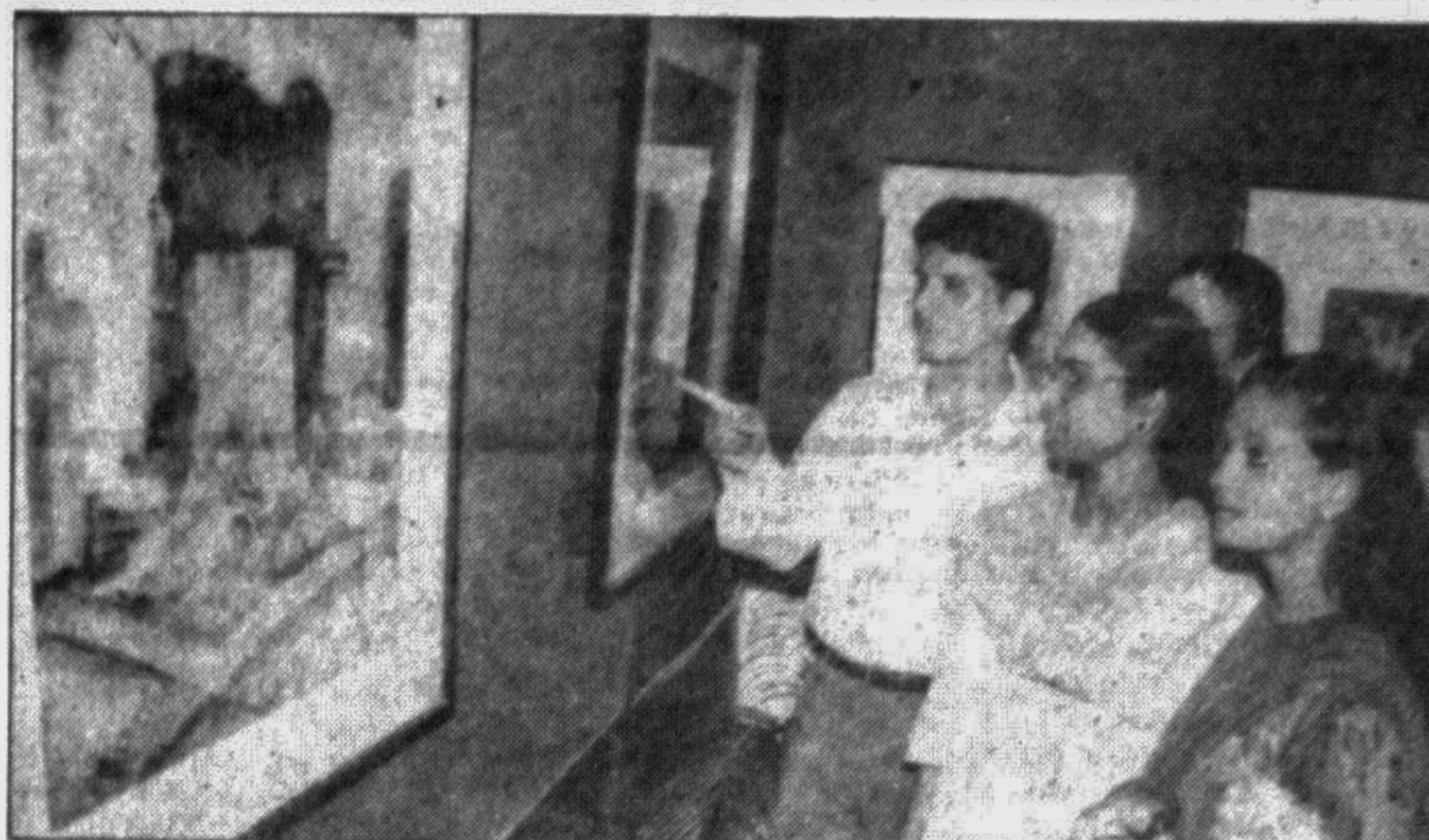
By DMCH Correspondent

Two pedestrians were killed in separate road mishaps in the city yesterday.

One unidentified female was crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus at Kalapatti near Jatrabari crossing at 12 noon yesterday. Police seized the killer vehicle and arrested its driver Akhter Hossain.

At Cantonment area a passerby Mukhtar Hossain died on the spot when a bus knocked him down near MES bus-stand yesterday afternoon. Both the bodies were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Visitors at the second solo painting exhibition of Kazi Safahuddin Ahmed at the Alliance Francaise in the city yesterday.



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## New gallery at Barendra Museum

RAJSHAHI, Nov 19: A new gallery, named 'Abahaman' Bangladesh, was set up at the Barendra Museum of Rajshahi University last week, reports UNB.

## Happy Birthday to Nadia

Abbu, Maa and Bubbu



Abbu, Maa and Bubbu

## DCC to complete all dev works before rains

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has decided that all development works including digging of roads in the capital will be completed before the onset of rainy season both to mitigate sufferings of the citizens and also avert misuse of funds, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a meeting Thursday at the corporation's office with Mayor Mirza Abbas in the chair. Heads of various agencies entrusted with the task of city's development attended the meeting.

The meeting also decided that different agencies will check each other's development work and in case of question arising about the quality of works of any agency, the concerned agency would be intimidated and asked to stop work and take necessary steps.

## Security to Customs officials urged

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Customs Excise and VAT Executive Officers Association in a statement Friday demanded exemplary punishment to Nurul Huq Sikder for instigating the recent attack on the Zia International Airport (ZIA).

The association also urged the government to ensure security to the customs officials.

Explaining the incident which led to the mob attack on ZIA, the association said that Sikder was passing through the green channel with a foreigner whose baggage was marked as containing taxable items.

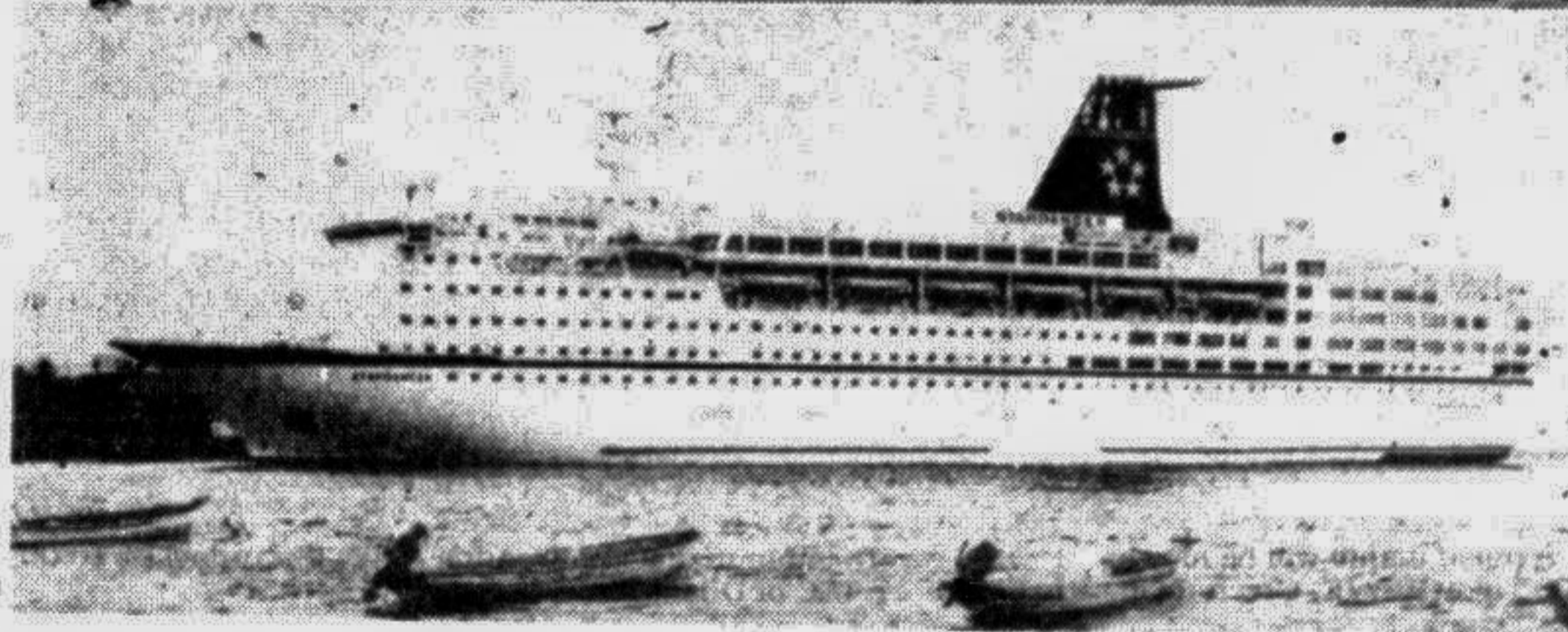
## North South University (NSU)

Administration: B-76, Road 21, Banani, Dhaka. Phones: 881495, 606047  
Main Campus: Star Tower, 12 Kemal Ataturk Ave., Banani. Phone: 885369.

NSU will soon sign Academic Collaboration Agreements with The George Washington University and Colorado State University, USA. Academic degrees and credits earned at NSU will be accepted by these universities and NSU students can seek admission at any stage of the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in these universities.

Last Admission Test for Undergraduate programs starting from January '94 will be held on Friday, 3 December 1993 at NSU Old Campus at Abedin Tower, 35 Kemal Ataturk Ave., at 9:30 AM. Students with high Second Division in SSC & HSC & O-Level with five subjects & A-Level with at least two subjects may apply. Application forms are available at NSU Administration Office. Completed application forms will be received at the same office until 4:00 PM of December 2, 1993.

## WORKING ON BOARD A CRUISE SHIP!



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cooks, and waiters; to administrative personnel, doctors, deck-officers and the Captain. Some of the positions requires previous experience and others such as the entry level positions do not require any experience.

Obviously, it is a good time to apply for a cruise ship job

Cruise ships normally sail on one week cruises from Miami, USA to and around the Caribbean making 4-5 stops during the trip e.g. St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, Cancun, Mexico etc. On your time off, you will have the opportunity to visit some of these

places. Salary levels range from US \$ 800 - 3,000 per month depending on the position onboard. Some positions onboard make even more money since they receive tips as part of their salary. When living and working on board a cruise ship you will have very little or no expenses at all since your accommodation and all food is free of charge.

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WCC announces that the NEW DEADLINE for Application is DECEMBER 15, 1993

## Seminar on Geography edn

Bangladesh Geographical Society (BGS) held a one-day seminar on Geography Education in Schools and Colleges in Bangladesh in the Geography Department, University of Dhaka, yesterday, says a press release.

Professor Nazrul Islam, president of the Society, chaired the seminar sessions. The keynote paper in the seminar was read by Kazi Gulshan Nahar, Head of the Department of Geography, Begum Badrunnesa College.

## Principal of Holborn College due today

Valerie Aggett, Principal, and J R Fairhurst, Registrar of The Holborn College, London will arrive in Dhaka today on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, says a press release.

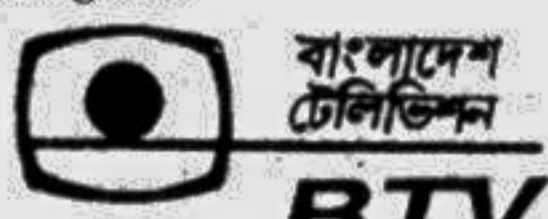
This is very well-known college in UK and a good number of Bangladeshi students study in this college. This college offers courses, *inter alia*, in LLB (Honours) degrees and Bar Examinations (for non-UK practitioners).

Holborn style of teaching is unique. Courses are carefully designed to meet needs of the individuals with wide ranging international options available to the students. This college conducts courses for both London University and Wolverhampton University in UK. It is very popular college amongst the students from this sub-continent.

Students and the guardians who are interested to meet Aggett and learn more about what is involved in the study of law can see her at Bhuiyan Academy, House No 13, Road No 17, Dhanmondi Residential Area, on November 22 between 10. am -12 noon. The Bhuiyan Academy is recognised representative office and counselling centre of Holborn College in Bangladesh.

During her stay in Bangladesh Mrs. Aggett will call on Chief Justice of Bangladesh and discuss studies of law courses in UK.

She will be staying in Hotel Sonargaon.



Saturday

- 5:00 Opening announcement
- Al-Quran
- Programme summary
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:35 Amra Natun
- 6:00 Cartoon Film: Young Robinhood
- 6:25 Tarunya
- 7:00 Bansharee
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:30 Matti-O- Matush
- 9:00 Magazine: Arashi
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Film show: Dallas
- 11:30 Khabar/The News
- 11:40 Tomorrow's programme

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme, Bangladesh seeks applications from female and male Bangladeshi nationals for the post of **National Programme Officer- HIV/AIDS**. Apart from monitoring programmes and projects and specific responsibilities as per terms of reference of Programme Officer, HIV/AIDS, the requirements of the post include the ability to relate to the HIV epidemic within the context of UNDP's mandated field of concern and responsibility, i.e. as a development issue and have a through awareness of overall development issues within which to be able to better understand the economic and social causes and consequences of the epidemic. He/she should also have a grasp of capacity-building and sustainability; the multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral characteristics of the epidemic; the potential role of government, NGOs/CBOs, the private sector and other parties in mobilizing an effective response as well as the legal, ethical and gender dimensions involved.

Salary ranges from Tk. 370,170- 462,720 net per annum plus other admissible allowances as per UN rules.

### Qualifications :

Minimum of a Master's degree in a social field with preference given to sociology and social behaviour sciences. The candidate should have experience in working both with the government as well as with NGOs with a minimum of 2 to 5 years working experience in a related field. The candidate should have a good knowledge of STDs and AIDS in Bangladesh, while written and spoken fluency in both Bangla and English are essential. Basic computer skills also required.

Application with detailed bio-data should be addressed to the **Personnel Officer, UNDP, GPO Box 224, Dhaka-1000** and be received no later than **5 December 1993**. For more detailed terms of reference Personnel Officer of UNDP, Dhaka can be contacted.

Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

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