

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Bridging Gap between the East and the West

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



Sitarist Brian Silver

To begin a week day with a soft soothing Raag Mian ki tori is surely a luxury in our hectic, mundane lives. Yet it was just this that the audience at a sitar recital held at the USIS, enjoyed on November 23rd. To add to this novelty was the fact that it was not a Khan or an Ali playing the beautiful mahogany instrument, but a Silver all the way from Washington, USA.

Brian Silver, an American sitar player, started one of his favourite raags — Mian ki tori — with low, soft notes that had a hint of sadness and later built up into an exciting, rippling conversation with *tabachi* Gobal Das ending with a questioning refrain.

If seeing an American play an instrument so possessively sub-continental seemed unusual, for Silver it has been the most natural thing to do. His interest in South Asian music, he said, grew out of working for a record store in Denver where he grew up later to discover the first LP record of South Asian music in the public library there. It was later, while experimenting with Flamenco music on a guitar and banjo that Silver decided to try and bring out a raag on these two Western instruments.

After this informal initiation and after graduating from Harvard College in 1964, Silver went to India as a Fulbright scholar to learn the sitar under Ustad Ghulam Hussain Khan of the *gharana* of the legendary Bande Ali Khan. "It was a wonderful experience," said Silver, "waking up at four in the morning for lessons; the [Ustad Ghulam Hussain Khan] taught me very openly."

In 1966 Silver returned to the US and has since appeared in concert and in radio and television broadcasts in India, Pakistan, Great Britain, Canada and all over the US. In 1988 he was awarded the honorary title of Khan Sahab by the All Pakistan Music Conference which also gave him its 1989 gold medal. In 1991 he was again recognised for his sitar performance by a Grant-in-Aid from the District of Columbia Commission for Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Silver agreed that classical music of the subcontinent did help to bridge the gap between the East and West by "breaking down the barriers". He referred to many Western musicians such as John Coltrane and Philip Glass whose compositions have been greatly influenced

by Indian classical music. Referring to the status of Indian classical music in the US in general, Silver said that it was healthy although not very coordinated. There was, nevertheless, a significant number of serious and sophisticated enthusiasts of such music in America namely, South Asian immigrants and second generation South Asians. Silver, who has been instrumental in establishing centres for Indian Classical Music in Chicago and Minnesota, commented, "I would like to see more support from the government lines to get Bangladeshi artists to perform in the US."

"Like a true musician Silver has taken the guru-shishya (teacher-pupil) relationship very seriously. He related an incident when he had gone to Berkeley to see the famous Ustad Ali Akbar Khan who was at that time teaching there. "I found him sitting in the classroom with a blackboard and with no instruments; only the students had instruments. We were very distressed to see this and so we went to the organisers of the programme and from then on he taught with his *sarodh*."

Yet this has not stopped him from being actively involved in the world of his dreams — classical music. He confessed being a "fanatical, demented collector of records, CDs and cassettes of Indian classical music."

Silver's favourites, he said, were raags that had some kind of ambivalence or ambiguity. "I am completely unable to play light, delicate raags like the *thumri*," he added.

Married to Shubha Sankaran, an Indian sitar and *surbahar* player, Silver has lived in India and Pakistan for long periods of time and is thus quite integrated with subcontinental culture. "I see myself as someone who, rather than feeling comfortable in his own culture, has a constant urge to look elsewhere," added the *gringo* sitarist.

Yunus tells JS

8,830 registered non-govt pry schools in country

There are 8,830 registered non-government primary schools in the country and another 7,830 have applied for registration, State Minister for Education Principal Mohammad Yunus Khan told parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

The new non-government schools will be registered soon after proper investigation, he said while replying to a question from Sardar Shakhawat Hossain Bakul (BNP).

Yunus told Jointly Abedin Farook (BNP) that 35,320 teachers of the 8,830 registered non-government primary schools are receiving government grants amounting to Taka 21 crore 19 lakh and 20 thousand annually.

The government has sanctioned Tk 427.33 crore for the infrastructural development of primary schools, he added.

Answering to a supplementary, the state minister said that 460 madrasahs, one each from 460 thanas of the country, were brought under the food for education programme.

Reduction in drop-outs

BSS adds: Education Minister Barrister Zamruddin Sircar yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that he expected that there would be a drastic reduction in the percentage of drop-outs at the primary level follow-

ing the introduction of compulsory primary education in the country.

Replying to a question of Abdul Awal Miah of AL, the Education Minister said that the percentage of drop-outs at the primary level earlier was 60.

The drop-outs at the secondary level was 67 per cent and that at higher secondary level was 28 per cent, he said.

He said that the percentage of drop-outs at the higher education level had to be determined.

1,337 adult edn centres

State Minister for Education Principal Mohammad Yunus Khan yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that 1,85,350 people had been given knowledge of alphabet since January one, 1991.

Replying to a question of Khan Tipu Sultan, the state minister said that there were 1,337 adult education centres now in the country.

To another question of Enamul Hoq (Jamaat), Khan said that compulsory primary education programme had been extended to all parts of the country. He said 69 thanas covering all the districts were brought under the mass-education programme.

The state minister informed the House that so far 147 voluntary organisations were involved in the programme.

Seminar on narcotics control begins Nov 29

A fortnight-long seminar on "narcotics control" will begin in Dhaka from Monday at Alliance Francaise auditorium, reports UNB.

The French Embassy in Dhaka with the help of Narcotics Control Department has arranged the seminar. The seminar will mainly focus on abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, techniques of detection and identification, search and surveillance, treatment and rehabilitation.

A total of 25 senior officials from Home Ministry, Department on Narcotics Control, Police, Bangladesh Rifles and Dhaka Customs, Excise and VAT Collectorate will take part in the seminar.

Two senior experts, R Martinez and D Nassoy from French Central Narcotics Bureau will conduct the seminar. They will be assisted by the local experts.

Military hardware display ends

The five-day military hardware display arranged on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day on November 21 at the Old Airport area at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar ended yesterday, reports BSS.

The gala exhibition was the main attraction for the city dwellers and thousands of people from all walks of life visited it everyday.

Enthusiastic visitors including youngsters and children went round different stalls where equipment, arms, ammunitions, vehicles, tanks, aircraft and replica of vessels used by the army, navy and air force were put on display. They showed keen interest on the exhibits.

Shows of documentary films on the war of liberation was an added attraction.

Cuban envoy presents credentials

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has said the obstruction of natural flow of the Ganges at Farakka barrage has been causing a process of desertification in the northern and western parts of Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"It is also causing salinity in the southern parts of the country threatening industries, agriculture, fish resources and reducing the navigability of the rivers," Biswas told Ambassador designate of Cuba to Bangladesh Olga Chamero Trias who presented her credentials to him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

"Bangladesh wants its due share of the water and hopes that India would agree to solve the problem," said the President.

While accepting her credentials, President Biswas told the Cuban envoy that the friendship between Bangladesh and Cuba was founded on a similarity of approach to many international and regional issues and on shared values.

He said Bangladesh had admiration to Cuba's achievements in mass literacy programme, economic reforms and human resources development and appreciated Cuba's role in non-aligned movement and third world affairs.

Presenting her credentials, Chamero hoped that the friendly relations that so happily exists between the two countries would be strengthened in the coming days.

Both the countries were making strides for improving the condition of the people and internationally subscribe to the policy of peace and understanding, she said.

BCS (Judicial) Assoc team meets Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas reiterated the determination of the present government to uphold the rule of law, reports UNB.

President Biswas was exchanging views with a six-member delegation of the BCS (Judicial) Association when they called on him at Bangabhaban yesterday. President of the Association Mohammed Abdus Salam led the delegation.

"Without rule of law, rights and privileges of the people cannot be ensured and peace and stability cannot prevail in the society."

Good working relation between members of the Bar and the members of the bench based on mutual respect and understanding is helpful in ensuring justice, Biswas said.

He mentioned that the lawyers are considered to be the friends of the people and they help the judiciary by analysing the legal points for dispensation of justice in complicated cases.

Barney Smith due today

Barney Smith, Head of the South Asia Desk at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, arrives in Dhaka today on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

During his visit, described by sources as a routine familiarisation trip, Smith will meet some Bangladesh officials and political leaders.

Fowler meets Matin

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Peter J Fowler called on Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury at his Secretariat office yesterday morning reports UNB.

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Bangkok	Yantra Bhum	07				
Hong Kong	Ludwigshafen	10/344	Imke Wehr	010	942/93	24-11-93

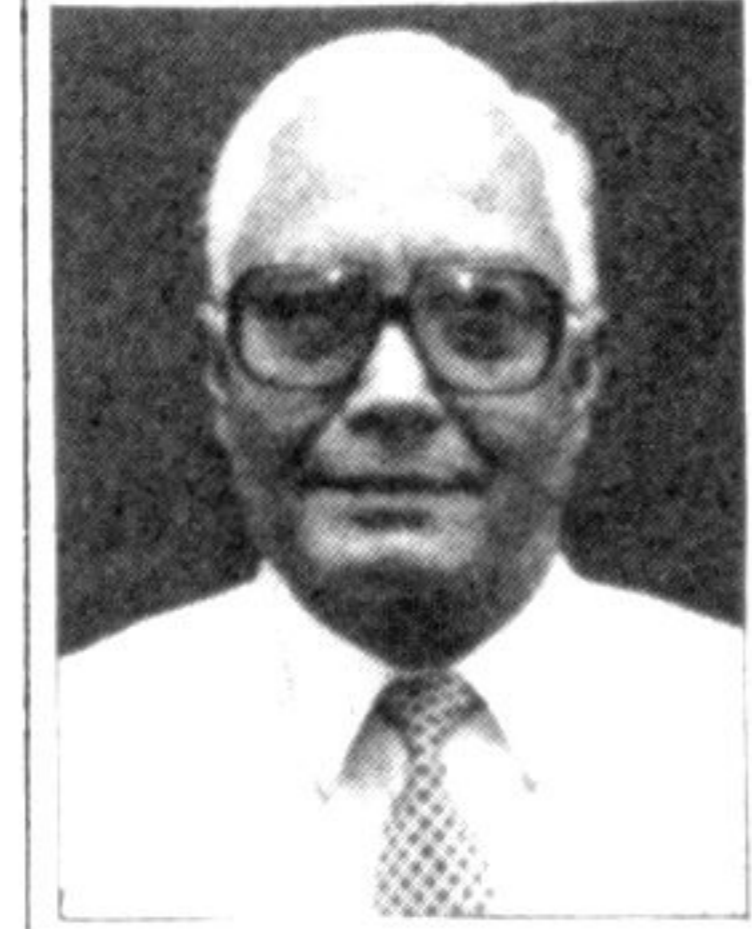
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ASM Khaled dead

By Staff Correspondent
ASM Khaled, popularly known as Lebu Bhai, died Wednesday of heart ailment at a hospital in Calcutta. He was 69. Khaled, who hailed from Shinepukur, was the chairman of the Newage Group of Companies. Director of Bangladesh Services Limited and one of the owners of Hotel Sheraton, Dhaka.

He left behind his wife, four sons, six grand children and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held today at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Jumma prayers. The *qu-khwani* of late Khaled will be held on the following day at his residence at Indira Road after Magreb prayers.

88 arrested in city

Police rounded up 88 people from different parts of the city yesterday on various charges, reports UNB.

Of the arrested, 10 were wanted criminals, one accused of arms case and four for stealing.

Friday BTV
Morning Session

- 8:00 Opening announcement
- Al-Quran
- Programme summary
- 8:10 News in Bangla
- 8:15 Alor Disheri
- 8:40 Nutan Kuri
- 10:15 Moner Mukurey Ayomoy (4th episode)
- 11:25 Film show Tarzan
- 11:50 Swasthaya Katha
- 12:00 Film Border Town

Afternoon Session

- 3:00 Opening announcement
- Al-Quran
- Programme summary
- 3:15 Cartoon show Teenage
- Mutant Ninja Turtles
- Movie of the week
- Earthquake
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:25 Sports Programme
- 7:00 Open University
- 7:25 Malancha
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:30 Comedy Series
- Perfect Strangers
- 9:05 Magazine: Drishtikone
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Drama series LA Law
- 11:30 Khabar/The News
- 11:40 Tomorrow's programme summary
- 11:45 Closing

Weather

Temperature may fall

By Staff Correspondent
The weather forecast for the next 12 hours commencing 6 am today (Friday) says, weather is likely to remain dry with a clear sky over the country.

The Met office forecasts, night temperature is likely to fall slightly to all over the country.

The country's highest temperature yesterday of 30.6 degrees Celsius was recorded in Kutubdia and the lowest 13.6 degrees Celsius in Dinajpur.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and relative humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday are:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degrees Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	28.0	18.0
Chittagong	29.0	17.0
Rajshahi	28.7	14.5
Barisal	29.6	16.2
	9am	6pm
Dhaka	63	71
Chittagong	79	62
Rajshahi	67	77
Barisal	78	91

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