

Dhaka Day by Day

The Knife-Grinder

by Parveen Anam

He is quite a familiar sight in Dhaka actually. Oh, granted not in the elite parts of the city where the elite reside in their palatial abodes, totally out of touch with reality and their city but in the older parts of the town, he is a well-loved character.

He is to be seen walking up and down the city alleys and bylanes, with his 'trade' on his back, literally, shouting himself hoarse, so his customers know he is there. He is the little man, who sharpens the knives, the 'daos' the cleavers, the 'choppers' you name it and is generally in great demand during one of the Eids and now, with the wedding season, doing the rounds.

The cooks like him because he is the one who sharpens his knives which make life infinitely easier with all the chopping and the cutting the cook has to do, poor man, and the housewives like him because they can save a lot of energy and nagging if the knives are all nicely sharpened and shining in their kitchens.

He walks the city streets from morning till night, sometimes making quite a bit of money as he sits at the doorstep sharpening the kitchen knives. His 'tool of trade' is a peculiar wheel mounted on a cycle-like contraption which he pedals, holding the knife to the edge of the wheel. As he spins the wheel, sparks fly in all directions as the knife is sharpened to a 'razor's edge' watched solemnly by either the cook, or his deputy.

A sharp word or two may be exchanged as one accuses the other of not doing a thorough job but the knife-grinder normally maintains a stately aura about him and lets the cook's words

fly over his head as he diligently works away at his trade.

Once the job is done, he will hand the knife or cleaver or whatever to the 'master' to be tested who will more often than not come back, shaking his head and insist on a few more minutes of work. It is a heavy burden for the 'worker' to win the approval of the 'boss' and he will do as requested, to please both parties. The knives will keep their edge for about a month, when it is again time for him to come around with his skills. The money is then given him, generally between Tk 10-15 for two items and everybody is happy.

Once again, it is perhaps a trade which is fast dying out, with 'stainless steel' knives and the lot making their appearance on the domestic front. The little man doing his job diligently, will be around a few days longer maybe, but if modern technology keeps up its pace, he might well be an extinct species.

It saddens the sentimentalists amongst us to see these indigenous arts slowly being eased out in the face of stiff competition from modern methods. Before long, a generation will come along which will probably only read about these men and their trade in history books; again the way the history books are distorted at the drop of a hat to suit the whims of whoever is at the helm of affairs, it is doubtful if history books will indeed reflect the true indigenous folk art or tradition. Someone, somewhere along the line will have to make sure that our priorities stay in their proper perspective.



Knife-grinder at work

— Photo: Mohsin



Newly-appointed Canadian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Jon J. Scott called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office on Sunday. — PID photo

Posthumous award for S M Ali

By Staff Correspondent

The Maitree Samaj Kalyan Sangha will posthumously award the founder-editor of The Daily Star late S M Ali with the Maitree Padak for his outstanding contribution to journalism.

According to a press release of the voluntary socio-cultural youth organisation, the award will be given on January 14 on the concluding day of the fourth Maitree Poush Mela.

Since 1980, the Maitree Padak has been awarded to individuals for their remarkable contribution in various spheres like removing illiteracy, self-employment projects, improvement of environment, relief and rehabilitation, sports, cultural and social development and others.

Poush Mela opens

Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam underscored the need for organising different types of fair to uphold our culture and heritage to the world community, reports UNB.

The minister was addressing as chief guest at the inaugural function of the 5-day Poush Mela organised by Maitree Samaj Kalyan Sangha at Faridabad High School premises in the capital yesterday.

Tariqul Islam said, trained and well-organised youth community are the guiding forces of social development. He called upon the members of the Maitree Samaj to adopt projects for self-employment of illiterate and poor people and thus to involve them with the mainstream of national development.

Organised for raising funds to help distressed children of the night school run by the sangha, the mela comprising of 50 stalls bears the rich heritage of the country with varieties of traditional goods of attraction.

Presided over by the President of the Sangha Wali Mohammad the function was addressed by State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeque Hossain, Chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Syed Shahidul Huq Jamal, MP, Chief Adviser of the Sangha Kazi Golam Hossain Ratan and Vice-President of the Sangha Rezaul Karim Babu.

Graphic show begins

A ten-day graphic exhibition of Wakilur Rahman began at the German Cultural Centre, Goethe-Institut, in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The exhibition will remain open for all from 10 am to 8 pm until January 20.

On the concluding day, an open discussion with the artist will be held at 5 pm at exhibition hall of the centre.

Harun for greater scout movement

State Minister for Relief

Harun-al-Rashid yesterday emphasised on the importance of a greater scout movement in the country to make the young generation a disciplined force enabling them to take part in the development activities, reports UNB.

"The young generation should follow the norms and values of scouts and dedicate themselves in nation building activities in the greater interest of the country," he said while addressing a rally of the 5th Bangladesh National and 14th Asia-Pacific Scout Jamboree at National Museum in the city.

National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts M Fazlur Rahman also addressed rally, attended by about 1200 participants.

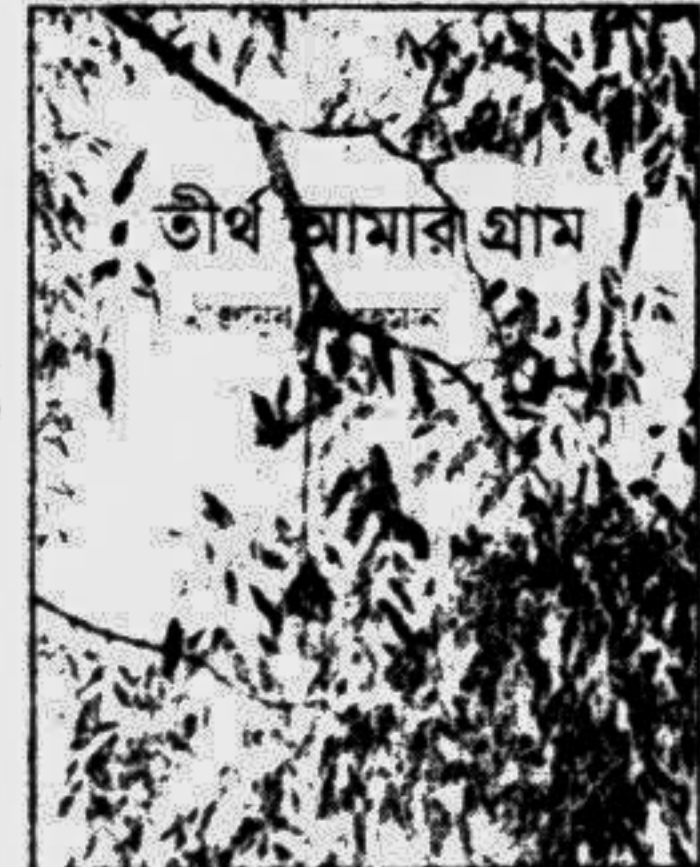
Tirtha Amar Gram on sale

By Staff Correspondent

Tirtha Amar Gram (Holy is my village), a collection of essays by an expatriate Bangladeshi, went on sale recently.

Professor Mizanur Rahman, now teaching Mathematics in Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, gave vent to the feelings of an expatriate heart in his collection of essays.

Basically a mathematician, Professor Rahman earlier earned international fame as a co-author of the book 'Basic



Hyper Geometric Series' published by the Cambridge University, UK. The book was later translated in Russian language and was awarded the best book in Mathematics in 1993. Since 1965, Professor Rahman has been teaching Mathematics at the Canadian University. He had his B Sc Honours degree both in Mathematics and Physics obtaining first class in 1953 and later completed his Masters degree in 1954.

A regular contributor in a Canadian Bengali journal 'Bangladesh' and 'Probashi' published from New Jersey, Professor Rahman was born in 1932. He taught in the Department of Mathematics of the Dhaka University in the early sixties.

Professor Rahman, in his recent visit to Bangladesh, told The Daily Star that his staying abroad has given him insight to love and feel the country more.

PM seeks Canadian help for rural electrification

Bangladesh Sunday sought Canadian assistance for rural electrification that will generate massive economic activities in the countryside, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, appreciating Canadian assistance in different sectors, said rural electrification would also help in implementation of various development programmes, initiated by the government.

She was talking to the newly appointed High Commissioner of Canada, to Dhaka, Jon J. Scott, when he called on her at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday afternoon.

Bangladesh is the recipient of the highest Canadian aid for poverty alleviation, women uplift, gas sector and crop diversification.

Pointing at the positive impact of power on rural areas, Begum Zia said with power many things, including television, would spread to villages which will help create awareness among the people.

The Prime Minister also sought technological assistance from the North American country for the expansion of environment-friendly jute, of Bangladesh.

Mentioning the prevailing democratic atmosphere in the country, she hoped that Canada would come forward to assist different socio-economic uplift programmes, that will help institutionalise the hard-earned democracy.

The envoy mentioned the good relation between Dhaka and Ottawa, and assured of his country's continuous support to Bangladesh.

Bhutanese envoy meets Zahir

Bhutanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Lyonpo Tashi Tobgyel called on Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan at his office in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

ANANDA MELA

VENUE: ESKATON LADIES CLUB
DATE: 13th & 14th JANUARY
THURSDAY & FRIDAY
TIME: 10.A.M TO 8.P.M

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Jewel Rich Show

IN AID OF OFA WELFARE FUND

Venue: The Winter Garden,
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Date: 12th January 1994 (Wednesday)
Time: 1830 hrs-2030 hrs

Cards available at:
Dhaka Sheraton Hotel Lobby

Organized by:
Old Faujians Association
(Organization of Ex Cadets of
Faujdarhat Cadet College)

Space Sponsored By: QC Shipping Ltd.



Read the full text of The Daily Star Round Table on 'Primary Education for All by the Year 2000: Problems and Prospects' to be published tomorrow, Wednesday, 12 January 1994.

The Round Table was participated by:

(Alphabetically)

- 1) Mr. Abdullah Al-Muti Sharfuddin
Director, Campaign for Popular Education
- 2) Mr. Abdus Samad Azad
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament
- 3) Ms. Emie Watanabe
Resident Representative, UNDP
- 4) Mr. C.R. Willoughby
Chief of Mission, World Bank
- 5) Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed
Executive Director, BRAC
- 6) Dr. Kamal Hossain
President, Gono Forum
- 7) Dr. Kamaluddin Siddiqui
Secretary to the Prime Minister
Govt. of Bangladesh
- 8) Mr. Kazi Fazlur Rahman
Former Secretary
Govt. of Bangladesh
- 9) Mr. Kazi Rabiuddin Ahmed
Secretary, Primary and Mass Education Programme
- 10) Dr. Qazi Faruque Ahmed
Executive Director, Proshika
- 11) Mr. Rolf C. Carriere
Representative, UNICEF
- 12) Ms. Shamee Ara
Programme Head, Education
Gono Shahajyo Sangstha
- 13) Dr. M. Yunus
Founder-Managing Director
Grameen Bank

Moderator

Mr. Mahfuz Anam
Editor
The Daily Star

Another example of The Daily Star's continued effort to highlight urgent development issues.



Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda speaking at the opening ceremony of a 3-day long Japanese film festival at the ball room of Hotel Sonargaon yesterday. Also seen seated (from L to R) Japanese Ambassador Shigeo Takenaka and A K M Abdur Rouf, president of Rachona Film Society. — Star photo

BOU seminar held

State Minister for Education Principal Md Eunus Khan yesterday emphasized on informal education for achieving the desired result in agriculture, health, family planning and environmental education, reports UNB.

He was speaking as chief guest at a seminar, organised by Bangladesh Open University (BOU), on the drafts of its need assessment survey.

Japan to help develop quality movies: Huda

By Staff Correspondent

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda expressed the hope that Japan would extend its assistance in the development of quality movies. Inaugurating a 3-day long Japanese film festival as chief guest at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday he said, "The festival will interest the viewers to new ideas and images of Japan."

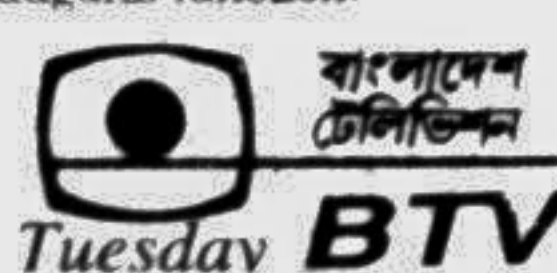
The Information Minister expressed the hope that Japanese film-makers would kindle new lights in the mind of viewers.

Barrister Huda said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has taken the initiative for the flourishing of quality movies in Bangladesh.

The festival jointly organised by the Embassy of Japan and the Rachona Film Society was also addressed by Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Shigeo Takenaka and A K M Abdur Rauf, president of the Rachona Film Society.

The ambassador said this film festival is an "excellent opportunity" to study the similarities between the cultures of the two countries.

Film 'A Fugitive from the Past' was screened following the inaugural function.



4:30	Opening announcement Al Quran
4:35	Programme summary News in Bangla
4:45	Mass education programme: Esho Para Shikhi
5:20	Cartoon show: Captain Planet
5:55	National TV debate competition
6:35	Open University Modern songs programme: Sangrta
7:20	News in Bangla Fortnight Drama serial: Subarna Samoy (1st episode)
8:00	News in English
8:30	Film: Northern Exposure Khabar/The News
10:00	Tomorrow's Programme summary
11:40	Closing

মুন্সী ইসলাম
সচিব

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

British Airways is looking for a special person in Dhaka.

A Duty Engineer to carry out transit and turnaround checks plus defect rectification on British Airways (and any future customer airlines/operators) in Dhaka.

Responsibilities/Qualifications would be:

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