

Dhaka Day by Day

A Flashback of Historical Moments

by Sharier Khan

Robert Clive came, saw and signed an agreement of cooperation on behalf of the East India Company of Great Britain with the Nawab of Bengal Siraj-ud-Dowla on February 12, 1757. The Nawab could hardly guess that it was only the beginning of the saga of the 200-year rule of the British Raj in the whole sub-continent. It must have had been unknown to the Nawab that Clive had simultaneously signed an agreement of cooperation with his Commander-in-Chief Mir Zafar Ali Khan at the same time. The result: the pathetic war of Plassey between the Nawab and East India Company and the killing of Siraj by Mir Zafar from behind.

For the first time in the history of Bangladesh, Bangladesh National Archives at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar has opened up the opportunity for the public to see with their own eyes the documents of such historic agreements. The National Archives has organised a fortnight long exhibition at its premises from July 21. This has given the people the chance to see hand written and printed documents dating back as far as the mid eighteenth century up to the War of Independence in 1971.

The exhibition, inaugurated on July 21 contains over 100 important documents. The National Archives selected these documents with the help of its council member Dr Muntasir Mamun and painter Hasahim Khan out of over 5 lakh documents preserved in its stock. The archive being grossly understaffed, the whole process took about a whole year. The documents, kept behind glass in the exhibition room reveal interesting facts of the past. In 1791, for Tk 0.80 you could buy a maund of rice. In 1887, for one taka, you could get almost half a maund rice. Even in 1934, one taka could buy you 11 seer (10 kgs) of rice. For one taka nowadays, you could purchase one tenth or one fifteen of a kg of rice.

Similarly, a maund of salt would have cost you around Tk 4.70 in 1791, edible oil Tk 3.30 and sugar Tk 6.95. And how much did the people earn at that time? A document of the Dhaka District Collectorate and Dhaka Zila Court Office of 1790 reveals that the lowest salary of that office was drawn by peons, molahs and brahmans. Their salary was around Tk 5 per month.

The *nayeb* of that office used to draw a monthly salary of Tk 15. The registrar however, who must have been a British, used to draw Tk 500 monthly.

The exhibition will also give you a chance to see with your own eyes an application written by Warren Hastings to the East India Company in 1748 for a clerical job. Hastings later became the Governor General of India.

The documents of the sensational case of Bhawal Sannyasy of 1930 or the navigability records of the Ganges in 1923 or the Ramayana and Mahabharata Manuscripts (undated) or rare educational sector documents as old as 1874 are all there in the exhibition.

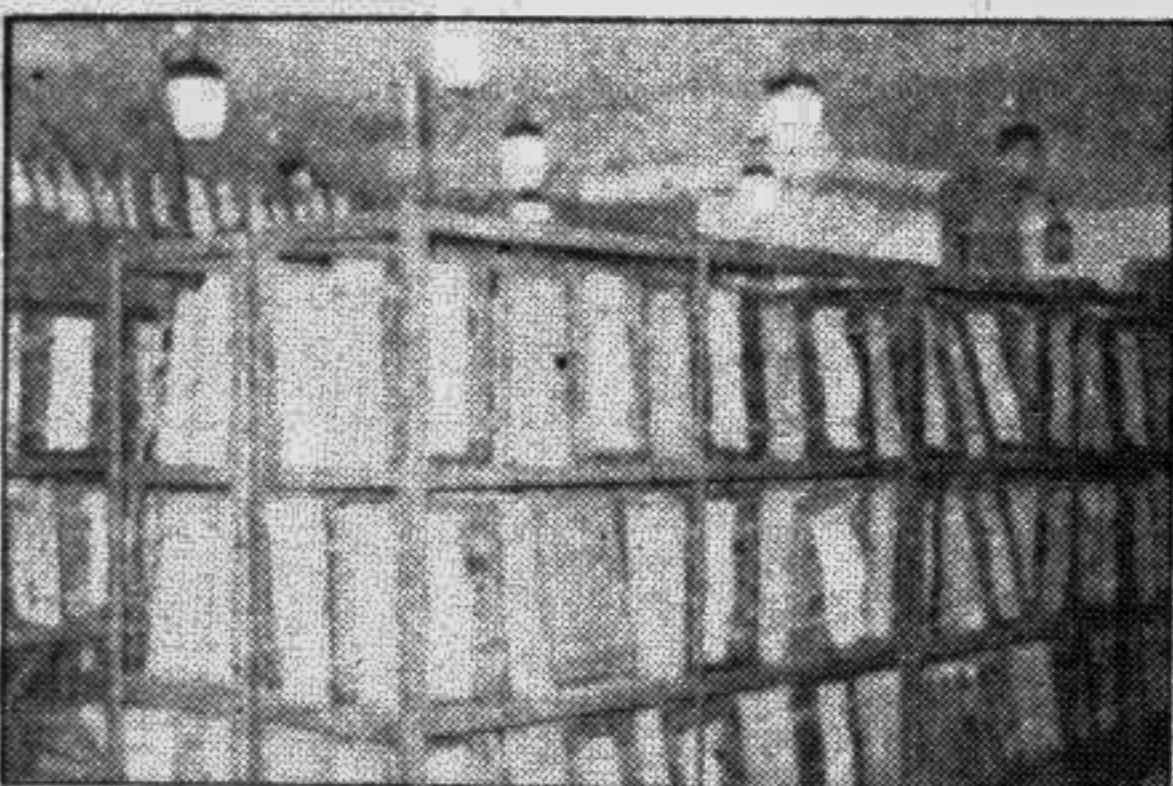
The records of recent times include: the martial law declaration papers of Ayub Khan in 1958; paper cuttings of the Language Movement in 1951; the declaration of the six-point charter of demands by Awami League leader Sheikh Mujib in 1966; anti-Pakistan posters and many other things that people have perhaps forgotten.

It is surprising that with all these treasures, the National Archives could not put up a single exhibition before because of lack of initiatives and funds from the government side.

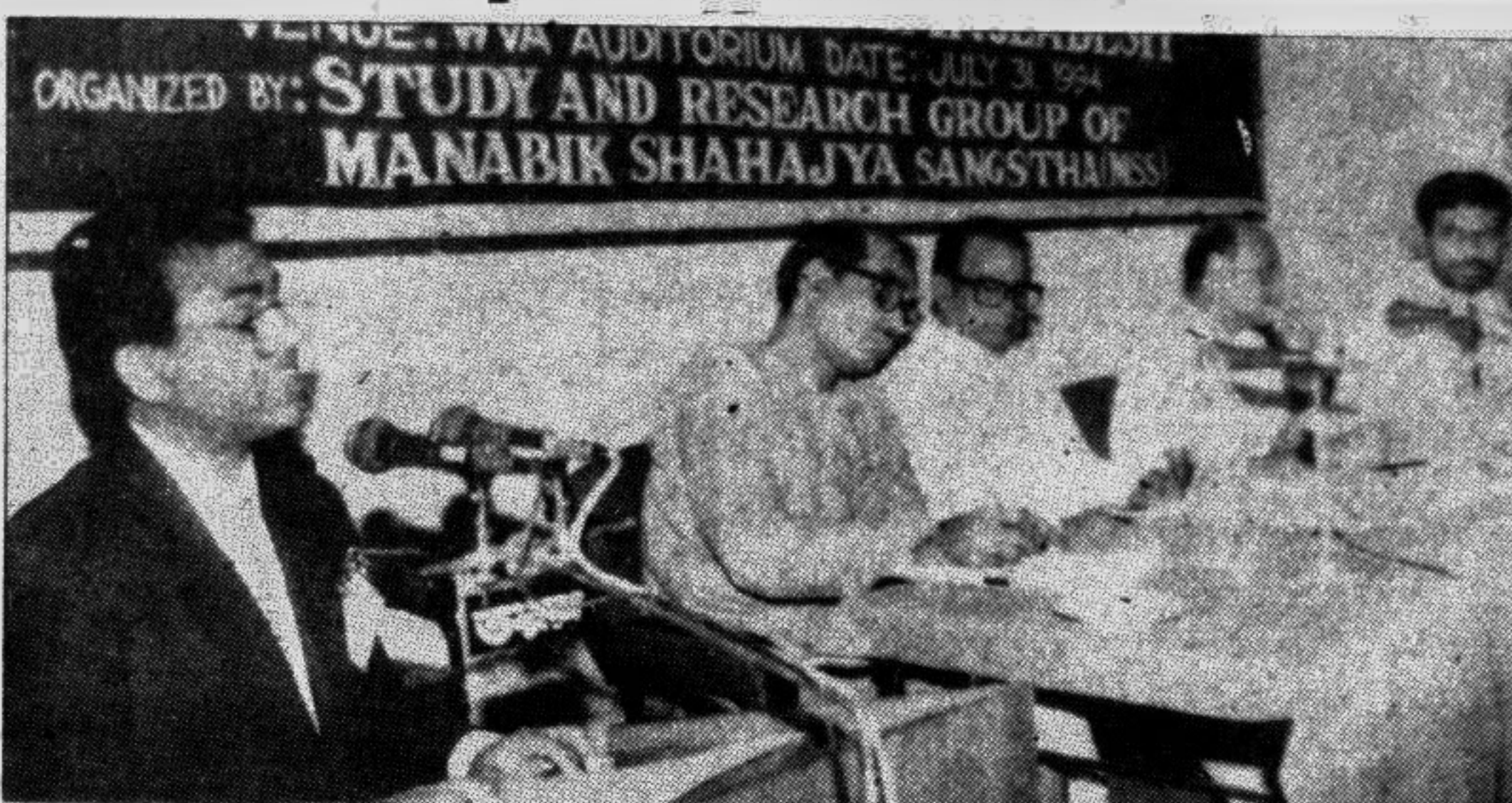
"It is the most neglected sector of the government. The ministry of cultural affairs had never shown any interest about bringing these documents before the public," said Muntasir Mamun on the inaugural day of the exhibition.

He described the environment of the National Archives and pointed out that layers of dust had settled down on the preserved documents. There were no modern chemicals and equipment needed for better preservation of the documents, he added. While the archive owns a piece of land, it is presently sharing the space with the national library. Six of the archives' posts have been vacant for the last six years. The annual budget of the archives was around Tk 72 lakhs, it was disclosed on the occasion.

Despite these constraints, the exhibition could be arranged with the commitment of the authorities of the archives. The show, to celebrate the Bangla fifteenth century is certainly the best effort so far to give the public a real glimpse of the past.



Bangladesh National Archives: Capturing historical moments.



Awami League MP Syed Abul Hossain addressing a seminar on 'Reflections on Ensuring Free and Fair Elections in Bangladesh' organised by the Study and Research Group of the Manabik Sahajya Sangstha in the city yesterday. From left are Prof M Mufazzalul Huq, Salahuddin Yusuf, MP, Tariqul Gani and Feroz Hassan. — Star photo

World Breastfeeding Day today

The World Breastfeeding Week begins with the observance of World Breastfeeding Day today. This year's theme is: "Protect Breastfeeding — Making the Code Work", reports UNB.

Various government and non-government organisations, including the Campaign for the Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding, have arranged elaborate programmes on the occasion.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf will inaugurate the day's programme at the Public Library auditorium at 10 am today.

Earlier, the Deputy Health Minister Sirajul Haq will lead a rally from the Shishu Park at 7:30 am. Radio and TV will air special programmes and newspapers publish supplements to mark the day. Seminars, art and essay competitions will also be arranged.

Five seminars covering all aspects of breastfeeding management will be held from August 2 to August 7. Similar programmes will be held in all 64 districts during the week.

On the eve of the day/week, the Campaign for the Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding arranged a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday where the organisation's Chairman Dr MQM Talukdar demanded that breastfeeding be promoted for the sake of millions of children.

BSS adds: President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday underscored the importance of breastfeeding for physical and mental nourishment of children and their all round growth.

In a message in observance of World Breastfeeding Day, President Biswas said there is no alternative to mother's milk in developing healthcare of the children.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday underlined the need for strengthening the family and social responsibilities to childhealth care.

In a message on the occasion of the World Breastfeeding Day, she said after the birth of every child, he or she should be given only breastfeeding five months at a stretch to protect him or her from malnutrition and other diseases.

One kg heroin recovered: 4 arrested

KHULNA, July 31: Detective police in separate raids in the city today recovered one kilogram of heroin and 140 bags of adulterated cement and arrested four people, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a shop at Supermarket and recovered the heroin. Rabiul Islam, 22 and Jahangir Kabir, 23 were arrested in the swoop.

In another raid on a shop at Bhasani Market at Station Road late Saturday night and seized 140 bags of spurious cement and 6 tons of raw material of cement.

Anwar Hossain and Jamaluddin were arrested from the spot.

Two cases have been filed with Sadar thana.

CA exams results

The council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh yesterday announced the results of the CA Final and Intermediate examinations of the institute held in May 1994, reports BSS.

Candidates who have passed the CA Final Examination are: Roll nos. 1133, 1136, 1146, 1148, 1157.

Candidates who have passed Group 1 only of the CA Final Examination are: Roll nos. 1023, 1046, 1086, 1103, 1115.

The candidate who has passed group 'A' and 'B' of the CA Intermediate Examination has Roll no. 266.

Candidates who have passed group 'B' only of the CA Intermediate Examination: Roll nos. 15, 24, 53, 56, 59, 70, 87, 96, 109, 117, 146, 174, 183, 201, 233, 242, 249, 264, 286 and 390.

Candidates who have passed group 'B' only of the CA Intermediate Examination: Roll nos. 7, 65, 85, 91, 103, 131, 158, 162, 178, 180, 189, 191, 216, 262, 292, 308, 316, 332, 344, 384, 395, 456, 459, 1011, 1021, 1101, 1116, 1122, 1129, 1174, 1175, 1178, 1179 and 1183.

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Biswas, Khaleda greet Swiss President

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia have greeted Otto Stich, President of the Swiss Confederation, on the occasion of its founding anniversary today, reports UNB.

"It gives me great pleasure to convey to your excellency our sincere greetings and felicitations on the happy occasion of the anniversary of the founding of the Swiss Federation", the President said in his message.

He expressed firm conviction that the existing bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries will be further strengthened in the years ahead.

Kamrun's solo painting show begins today



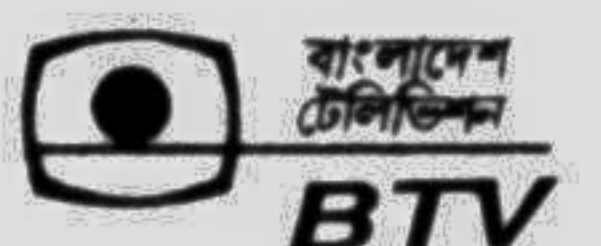
By Staff Correspondent

The third solo exhibition of Kamrun Nahar begins today at La Galerie, 54 Kemal Ataturk Avenue at Banani.

Jon J Scott, High Commissioner of Canada in Bangladesh, will open the week-long show at 5 pm.

Forty-five recent works of Kamrun in water colour, miniature oil and batik will be on display.

The exhibition will remain open everyday from 9 am to 8 pm till August 7.



Monday

- 4:30 Opening announcement: Al-Quran
- 4:45 Programme summary: Cartoon Film: Captain Planet and the Planetheers
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:25 Sports programme: Football
- 6:30 Chhandabritiya: Programme based on Recitation: SAARC audiovisual exchange: Archery
- 7:00 National Sports of Bhutan: Naaral songs
- 7:25 News in Bangla
- 8:30 Population programme: Janmat
- 9:00 Bolun Dekhi: Quiz programme
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Comedy series: Murphy Brown
- 11:10 Musical programme: Disco Rally
- 11:30 Khabar/The News
- 11:45 Closing

History,
March 15, 1967

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