

I was advised by a knowledgeable elderly person to adore at least by tongue two ladies and two lords for smooth passage of mundane business. By keeping these four persons greased and in good humour, he claimed, I could have won half the battle without any sabre-rattling or could avoid rancorous use of the tongue. These two ladies are the land lady and the home lady who has tacked you in wedding and the lords are the landlord and the office lord (boss).

Distant Drum

M N Mustafa

Bahadurs and Khan Sahibs had their varied share of licking the imperial boots of the British Raj.

Rightfully or wrongfully, landlord or landladies have earned notoriety in a such as they have become elements in literary honour. The film, 'Feku Ustagar Lane' has brought on celluloid what a houseowner man or woman, could be like or to what extent they could become a nuisance to the tenant or the society. In urban life, the houseowner is the central character in the money-minting machine. The complaints like leaking roofs, insufficient water supply, frequent raise in rent and bad maintenance often bring the lessor and lessee on collision course. It is the tenant who is destined to remain a cucumber for the lessor who might or might not cut it apart or sliced it if the cucumber is too soft or the lessor's knife too sharp. Here the tenants could not joint hands to fight the landlord but elsewhere tenants collectively fought them. Their efforts aborted as money and moneyed people could buy all laws if sense of legitimacy and will to honour it does not settle in the mind permanently. In Ireland the rent holders formed a league in 1879 to procure reduction in rent and to promote ownership of houses and land. The authorities who possessed sharp knives cut all the tenant 'cucumbers into pieces.

The tenants, many claim, have always the Hobson's choice. It means the acceptance of what is offered when there is no choice. One Tobias Hobson kept an inn at Cambridge and hired out horses. Though he had a large

number of horses he always insisted that a prospective hirer should take the one nearest the stable door. The hirer had no choice of his own. Hobson amassed enough fortune, made a bequest to Cambridge and when died in 1631 a street in Cambridge was named after him. On his grave Milton wrote two humorous epitaphs about him. One poem honoured him and the other, his horses.

In Geneva where we lived in a rented apartment, the premises were overseen by a middle-aged woman, not a landlady but a consignee (pronounced as con-sear). She was not a broom-brandishing woman like the local ones who I used to present us chocolates and other gifts during Easter and Christmas. Any complaint about facilities used to drive her mad until they were restored or defects or removed. The complaints like leaking roofs never brought a reply to the effect that tenants could not expect syrup to fall from heaven.

One of the kindest landlady I found in Mrs. Elizabeth Clitherow at 7 Beacon Hill, London. She used to receive guests only from the British Council and the guests who were all fellows or students were to follow her rules of business. She allowed lady visitors upto 11 pm but no overnight stay. Once an African fellow broke the house law and next morning his baggage out on the street.

Except through money or material benefits it is difficult to penetrate the thick layer of the landlord or landlady's mind or good sense. But exceptions are there. I entered the hard crust of my English landlady by wiping her dishes

with a napkin. After serving the so-called English dinner (boiled potatoes, spinach and meat or fish) to 10 or 12 British Council fellows she used to put all the dishes in a big tumbler and then kept on a table for drying up. Anxious to improve upon my precarious existence and to get rid of the so-called English delicacy, I used to wipe the dishes with a napkin every night after dinner and soon situation improved. My landlady after ascertaining my preference started cooking rice and chicken for me. Two of my Indian neighbours, S B Chowdhury (a town planner from Andhra) and R F Pillai (an ICS in Assam Civil Service) equally anxious for rice and chicken eventually succeeded in getting these on my recommendation. Dish wiping further improved my destiny. I was moved to a single room just above the kitchen which needed no heating. The landlady gave me cooking pots to cook my own food when she did not serve the dinner. I used to get her free cinema pass in the Odeon Cinema where she held a share and finally during her holidays in Europe I held charge of the premises, collecting rents from tenants and the landlady claimed that the collected rents were my share and never she took them.

Thomas Carlyle used to live in a rented house where on the ground floor the landlord lived along with his chickens. Carlyle could not bear the crowing of the cock. A letter and conversation with the landlord could not silence the cocks. Finally Carlyle's wife Jane bought the house at double the price to teach the cocks the melody of silence.

The landlady felt no sorry at Carlyle's sleeplessness caused by cocks' crowing, but smiled heartily to see the rise in the value of his house.

Improving TV Programmes and News Broadcast

by Khurshida Haq

LIKE other developing countries, in Bangladesh research work being done in the broadcast media is meagre. And the small amount that is being done is not methodical. In BTv, there is an audience-research cell. Since inception in 1981, it has been collecting opinions of the viewers of different age-groups and class on various programmes through questionnaires. After receiving the questionnaires, the concerned official figures out the percentage rate and the report is published in 'TV Guide' — the trimonthly TV magazine. However, this system is not much credible.

The National Institute of Mass Communication, the only training institute for broadcast media in the country, also has a research section for broadcast programmes which started functioning in 1980. So far, the NIMC research section conducted 10 research works which included in TV — BTv's brief history, TV coaching and educational programme, management of broadcast engineering resource and utility of vocational training at home and abroad; and in Radio on agricultural, population and magazine programmes and rural audience-research. The other two on-going research topics in NIMC are morning programme 'Mahanagar' of Radio and BOU programme of Television.

Regrettably, both the organisations had not done any research on news, though news is a serious and important organ of BTv. However, time has not run out. In fact, it is the right time now to activate the research wing and make quality programmes according to the majority viewers' choice.

What are the programmes the viewers fascinated to watch? On what time which programme is to be telecast? What the country's womenfolk want to learn from the woman's programme? Their rights? Responsibilities? Behavioural change and pattern of the children? Living? Fashion? Cooking? Lives of the leading women in different professional fields? Are the children satisfied with their programmes and their time of telecast? What about news? Does it include public-interest topics? Is the news presentation alright?

Knowledge on these and similar others helps a producer to make a programme popular. The area of research in broadcast programme/news has no bound. But as viewers are the tax-payers, their views and choices regarding programmes should be taken into account and given due importance. Besides, due to the satellite TV invasion all over the world, almost all the broadcast organisations are now facing challenges and hard competition. BTv is not an exception. The introduction of satellite dish has given our viewers the opportunity to watch programmes of different TV channels, and compare those in the context of content, technical quality and presentation style. Moreover, within a couple of months (perhaps in January next) BTv is going to telecast its programmes overseas through new satellite ASIATASAT 2. Some 3.3 billion people are going to watch the programmes of

ASIATASAT 2. So BTv will have a huge audience to watch its programmes. As such, a great responsibility will be reposed on BTv to catch the attention of the audience or viewers. How will BTv hold its viewers and win their minds if it doesn't improve the quality of its programmes? Hence, the need for research arises. However, it must be considered here that research is not the only means to improve the standard of programmes, but through research the minds or choices of the viewers can be read, and the social need identified.

No matter how a producer makes a programme (in the outdoor or studio, with one TV celebrity or more, takes a day or more for shooting or editing), the important thing is that the programme involves 'money'. The equipment used in making the programme (camera, studio, OB van, recording and editing facilities etc) are expensive and every programme deals with people i.e. talents. The government and the general mass note how their money is spent and what are the outcome achievement of the programme is.

The objective of a broadcast organisation is to observe the impact of the programme on the public — whether the viewers are merely deriving sensual pleasure from the programme or is it enriching their knowledge? Will the knowledge benefit them? If it does so, then how? Why? After receiving the above viewers-based information, the pro-

ducer would have to pay attention to the programme itself. In this regard, firstly the producer must be sure that the information available to him would be effective to attain his objective; the language used in the programme is appropriate and the idea of the topic is understandable to the viewers. In short, the producer must be confident that the message of his programme is presented perfectly to attain its ultimate objective. No matter what type of programme has he made — whether it is entertaining or educational, the producer must make sure that any part of his programme or dialogue of the actors/actresses does not lose its credibility. After the telecast of the programme, it is not very difficult to get the feedback of the viewers on the programme. Follow-up research also helps in this regard. Thus, with the help of pre and post research works the producer can reexamine, modify, recast and make necessary changes in his programme.

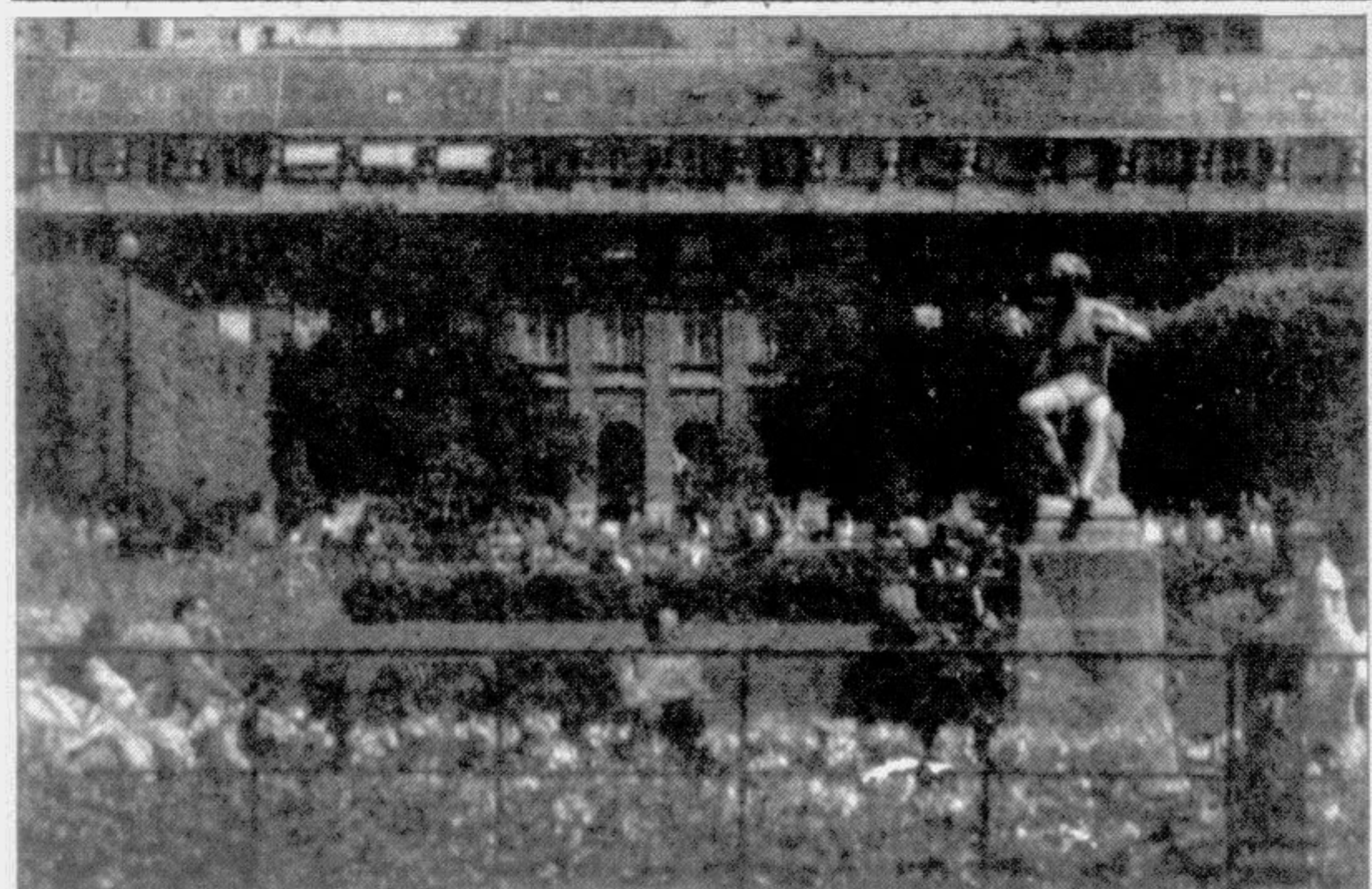
In spite of all the limitations of research there is no denying the fact that it helps the producer to go ahead in a certain direction, instead of pelting stones in the darkness.

Research guides the producer to rectify his limitations or loopholes in his experience, ideas, imagination, analysis setting of objectives and style of presentation in the preparation of a programme. Above all research helps to wipe out the distance between the broadcasters and the viewers.

The Newly Restored Palais-Royal Garden

by Sylvie Thomas

A thin jet of water and a few stunted trees, sad paths and a lot of dust. Although it is full of history, the Palais-Royal garden, right in the heart of Paris, had become rather austere-looking and bare. To the great surprise of visitors, it has suddenly become filled with luxuriant, romantic, poetic, exuberantly charming greenery. It is now a real pleasure to walk through it for both Parisians and tourists alike.



held there. After that, the Palais-Royal was given to Henrietta Anne (daughter of Charles 1st of England and Henriette-Marie of France), and Le Notre the prince of French-style gardens redesigned her garden which became a fashionable place for discussion. Next, the Duke of Orleans, his son the Regent and Louis-Philippe followed on one another at the Palais-Royal. In 1789, Camille Desmoulins launched his 12th July appeal from there. After that, crowd

gatherings were held there, royalist newspapers were committed to the flames, an effigy of the Pope was burnt and heads were displayed on pikes. Today, the Palais Royal houses the Ministry of Culture.

An American landscape artist and a French luxury specialist. In 1992, the American landscape painter John Mark Rudkin was commissioned to renovate the Palais-Royal garden. The cost of the work was estimated at 1.5 million francs,

almost half of which was paid by the Moët-Hennessy-Louis-Vuitton (MHLV) company. There is nothing incongruous about this choice. After all, the biggest world group for luxury goods is also traditionally connected to nature through its products: champagne, leather and precious fabrics, and it is also involved in promoting the prestige of France abroad. John Mark Rudkin decided to maintain the overall structure, which was established at the beginning of the 18th century,

restoring the greenery and flowers that were lacking. So the harmony of the two large flowerbeds and the lines of lime-trees have remained. The pools and the statues are also still there and visitors can still contemplate Magron's Latin Genius, presented to France in 1921 by the Latin Intellectual Fraternity League, founded on the death of the poet Ruben Dario by Latin American writers.

In addition to that, as is done in London, dedicated benches are going to be installed. The first will be to Charles Fourier, who, every evening, dreamt of an ideal world, in this garden. Other benches will be dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte who, it is said, was initiated there, and to the writer Colette who lived there in an apartment next to Jean Cocteau's.

The railings around the flowerbeds have been covered with ivy and scented honeysuckle. The flowerbeds themselves have been decorated with scented, luxuriant annuals. Every summer season will be treated according to a scheme of different shades of a single colour. In the first year, it was blue, mauve, violet and purple. Last year was yellow, pale yellow, sulphur yellow, bright yellow, dark yellow and orange. This year, from spring, the Palais-Royal garden is painted in pink and white, with the lilac of 'falcon' petunias, the pink hues of New Guinea busy-linzes, the white of 'mini-star' gazanias, the pale mauve of verbenas and the carmine pink, pure white and pinky-white of a host of other marvellous plants. It is a real feast for the eyes.

— L'Actualité en France

ATM Walie Ashraf

Continued from page 9 started his career as a reporter in a Dhaka vernacular daily. Even while in London he never forgot his beloved village home, in Banchharampur in Brahmanbaria. I bear live witness. I started my substantive career in government as a member of the erstwhile Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) as Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Brahmanbaria in November 1969.

The better communication and roadways that now exist between Banchharampur and the rest of the country, especially its capital Dhaka, owes a lot to the untiring work and lobbying by late Walie Ashraf.

We met again in London in late October 1972. It was a new beginning for all of us. Our country was liberated. Walie Ashraf's 'Janomat' was becoming an institution. I started exercises for obtaining a Ph D in the University of London.

For us London was friendship and solidarity for Bangladesh — a home away from home — thanks to the cementing force in the person of Ashraf Bhai. 2 Temperley Road was a virtual community centre. 'Janomat' was housed there. Later it found a niche at 89 Battersea Road, again in the Balham area — south of the Thames. The 'Janomat' office was the virtual heart of the Bangladeshi youth in London. The journal was the voice of the Bangladeshi community.

Its office was the centre of congregation of new generation of Bangladeshis in Britain dreaming of building a proud and prosperous homeland

At the heart of the dream was a man called Walie Ashraf who thought and spoke constantly of his village home. I remember an evening in Autumn 1973 when Sufia, my classmate and wife, and Mohammad Moinuddin Manju sat with Ashraf Bhai sipping tea at the 'Janomat' office as Ashraf Bhai spoke relentlessly of Banchharampur. Manju said,

He knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to come home and serve his people. He exactly did that and died penniless.

"Why do you speak of Banchharampur only? If you do become a political leader of Bangladesh, you have to think of the entire country."

Ashraf Bhai looked at him with moist eyes and replied, "How can I love and serve others, if I cannot be of service to my own mother?"

That was the essence of his philosophy. He truly saw the world in a grain of sand. He wanted and did serve his motherland by first trying to serve the area of his birth. For him there was no contradiction here — no dichotomy. He knew where he belonged. He

loved and served his fellow human beings, fully aware of the limits of human strength and endeavour. That was why despite the exacting demands made on his time by his career in journalism and politics, he remained a loyal husband to wife Rebecca Walie, loving father to daughters Ripa and Mouli and only son Rudra and a faithful companion to his friends in the first circle.

His loyalty was not divided. When he decided to come home to Bangladesh he sold his house in Temperley Road so that there was no lure to go back. None of his friends approved of his action. He was not moved. He knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to come home and serve his people. He exactly did that and died penniless.

He did not certainly know that he would die so suddenly and without fulfilling his mission. Who does? No one. And that is why they say, "Do not ask for whom the bells toll, it tolls for thee." The bells may toll their worst and toll till Doomsday but men like Walie Ashraf do not die. They continue to live as long as the dream for a better life for the poor, disadvantaged and deprived of the world remains unrealised.

Literacy Salon

Continued from page 10

gap during Martial Law restrictions. One group went away and another filled the space of the canteen. During 1956-57-58, the female students kept a close attachment to it. Among them were Nadira Begum, Jaharat Ara, Farida Bari Malek and Kamrun Nahar Laily. The canteen was found to be quite lively in 1966. There were interesting sessions of literary discussions.

In 1959, Ayub Khan created the Writers Guild. It was divided between the Eastern and the Western wings. The Guild arranged special tours for writers, introduced the Adamjee-Dawood and other awards. A lively salon grew in the Writers Guild office of the then East Pakistan branch.

In 1964, Munier Chowdhury was made the General Secretary of the Guild and steps were taken to give a good shape to 'Parikrama', a mouthpiece. Those who were attached with the Guild were Dr Mohammed Shahidullah, Kazi Deen Mohammad, poet Jasimuddin, Mohammad Enamul Huq, Dewan Azraf, Syed Murtaza Ali, Talim Hossain, ANM Bazlur Rashid, Mahub Jamal Zayed, Abdul Ghani Hazari, Hasan Hafizur Rahman, AMN Sharfuddin, Mofazzal Haider, Chowdhury, Abdul Quader, Lutful Haider Chowdhury, Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam, Dr Alauddin al-Azad, Khan Mohammad Moinuddin, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Ahmed Hossain, Sahed Ali, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Askar Ibne Shaikh, Sarder Joimuddin, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, Ahmed Sharif, Jahannara Arzoo, Prof Jahannara Imam, Prof Chamon Ara, Mohammad Idris Ali, Prof Razia Khan Amin, Abdur Rashid Khan, Matinuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Sajjad Yusuf, Ashraf Farooqi, Raihan Sharif and Mohammad Rafique, 'Sakkhor' and 'Kanthashor'

came out in 1965 from a gathering at the Hotel Nile Valley. Prof Abdullah Abu Syed later shifted the gathering for Kanthashor to his residence on Sundays. Prof Abdul Mannan Syed, Prof Abdullah Abu Syed, Prof Mohammad Rafique, Abul Hasan, Mahboobul Alam, Sajjad Quadir, Rabi Rahman, Zakaria 'Jack' Shiraze, Mohammad Abu Zafar, Abu Kayser, Jinnat Ara Malek, Asad Chowdhury, Jamal Khan, Yasin Amin, Shahidur Rahman were in this group.

In 1967-68 a group of youths like 'Abdul Mannan Syed, Rafiq Azad, Nirmalendu Goon, Jyoti Prakash Dutt, Digen Sharma joined the Samakal. The psychological conflict between the old and the new obviously created a rift within the salon. Sikandar Abu Zafar maintained the balance. In private life, poet Farrukh Ahmed and Sikandar Abu Zafar were close friends. But ideologically they remained so poles apart that Farrukh never wrote for Samakal. Sikandar Abu Zafar believed in socialism while Farrukh Ahmed believed in Islamic socialism.

Very lively salons also existed in the Sunday magazine rooms of all the major dailies and some periodicals since the early Pakistan period. Mukul Mahfil of the daily Azad under the guidance of Mohammad Modabber (Bagban Bhai) during the pre-Liberation days,

Kanchi Kanchar Mela of the Daily Ittefaq under the guidance of Rokonzaman Khari (Dada Bhai) since the early '60s, Chander Hat of Purabesh under the guidance of Ehtesham Haider Chowdhury and Rafiqul Haq and Shapla Kurir Asar of the Daily Banglar Bani under the guidance of Sheikh Fazul Huq Moni and Babu Biman Bhattacharya in the post-Liberation period are some of the past examples of

salons grown out of dailies which widely spread outside.

In 1956, there was a gathering at the Dainik Sangbad office when Mr Abdul Ghani Hazari was the magazine editor. In 1964, a lively gathering was noticed in the Dainik Pakistan (now Dainik Bangla) centering poet Shamsur Rahman. In 1965, when poet Ashan Habib was made the magazine editor the circle was found around him. It continued till his death.

The rising literatures used the dailies as their cradles. They wrote, discussed and created an inseparable chain. Such gatherings were also found in different periods in the Bangla Academy, Purabachal (a government publication) centering its magazine editor poet Abdus Sattar (sometimes after Liberation, the Bangladesh Times centering its magazine editor AUM Fakhruddin (1975 to 1982) and recently in the office of the Bhorer Kagoj exist such salons.

Sharif Mia's canteen near the Dhaka University library was quite lively from 1963-74. Known faces like Rafiqun Nabi, Kalam Mahmood, Keramat Mowla, Sahadat Chowdhury, Shahabuddin and Asad Chowdhury and Nirmalendu Goon were there.

Monico restaurant inside the New Market was found lively from 1967 to '74. Nirmalendu Goon, Abul Hasan, Sajjad Quadir, Shahnoor Khan, Helal Hafiz, Mahadeb Saha were a part of it for a long time. A salon was also to be found at the Senorita, Shahabagh from 1976 to '86 and at the Ittadi Press in 1987. A writers' salon (Kabuya Kurjal) is found at House No. 249/A, Dhanmondi Road-22 (old), Dhaka. Dr Malha Khatoun, Prof Azher Hossain, Prof Umme Kawser Salsabil, Kalimur Rahman, Syeda Nishat Ara Khanam, Ashrafu Haque, Lily Haq and Mina Aziz, among others, are in it. It is a society of writers and thinkers for the advancement of literary, artistic and aesthetic values.

THE stereotype image of the fortune teller is either that of a turbaned old man or a heavily-mad up madam gazing at a so-called crystal ball.

That's how he — or she — supposedly sees your future and finds the answers to your questions so you won't regret the hefty fee you paid.

But that images is passe. Today, the contemporary seer or stargazer can supposedly reveal what the future holds in store for you in a number of ways without the aid of a crystal ball.

For example, gypsies usually spread out tarot cards to "see" your future. Others use facsimiles of heavenly bodies to interpret signs while many simply look at the palm of your hand to their spiel.

However, in Lebanon, there is a certain breed of fortune tellers who uses a coffee cup — filled with coffee, of course — as a medium to read your future. To them, the coffee cup holds depths of great mystery which only a trained eye can see. Your dreams, ambitions, aspirations, future, wealth and wisdom are read in the intricate hieroglyphic designs in the cup.

But not just any coffee in the cup will do... it must be Turkish coffee with thick, creamy base which will stick



Reading Your Coffee

to the sides of the cup when it is turned upside-down, forming a very complex and picturesque pattern.

Also, not everyone can read it. Though many attempt to do so, it is said that only the gifted can really interpret the symbols etched in the cup.

Zainab Hassanian, an Egyptian living in Beirut, is one of them although when asked if she knew how to read a coffee cup she modestly replied, "Just a little bit."

She then took the cup, the saucer on top and turned it upside down. After leaving it to dry for a couple of minutes, she peeped inside and exclaimed, "The cup is all drawn... your life is very full."

Picking up the cup, she looked closely and thoughtfully into it, and then began an analysis which lasted almost an hour. Everything had a meaning, and some marks she combined to understand their significance.

"I didn't know I could read

the cup until a few years ago," said Zainab. "I had a dream and in it a woman wearing a long, white gown told me that the truth would be revealed to me in any cup I looked into. She said would guide me."

"At first I was frightened," she continued, "but as I read people's cups, I found I could give meaning to things other people couldn't see and everything I said always came true. People would come back and tell me so."

She explained that everything she said was pictured before her in the cup very clearly. Sometimes she puts a series of movements in the cup together to completed the whole picture, and tell the story.

Some of the things she saw were symbolic, she added. These had been passed down to her from her grandmother who could also read cups, but the meaning of some had come to her alone.

"For example, I dreamt of

some fish," she said, "and the next morning I was filled with inner peace and happiness... I took fish to represent this, and I'm sure I was not mistaken."

Zainab spoke of other symbols, such as pigeons, which represent paradise, and snakes, which represent an enemy. "If the snake is small, it means your enemy is a female; a big snake means he's a male," she said. Here are some of her prognostications:

A piece of raw meat or raw chicken in your cup is bad — it means you'll have a big fight or a quarrel with someone.

If you see a loose milk tooth, it means a young girl will die, but if it's a wisdom tooth that's loose, a man is going to die.

A small girl in your cup is a very good sign. It means your whole world will open up like that of a child and your eyes will see new life and happiness. If it's a little boy, then you can expect just the opposite.

A white dress means you're a bride-to-be, and a gold object signifies a wedding ring. The climax of this is two men holding hands, a young and an old one, with a handkerchief covering their hands.

"This means that, they will write the books," and Zainab.

— Depthnews Asia