

Dhaka Day by Day

Lessons of Ekushey Still Survives

by Raffat Binte Rashid

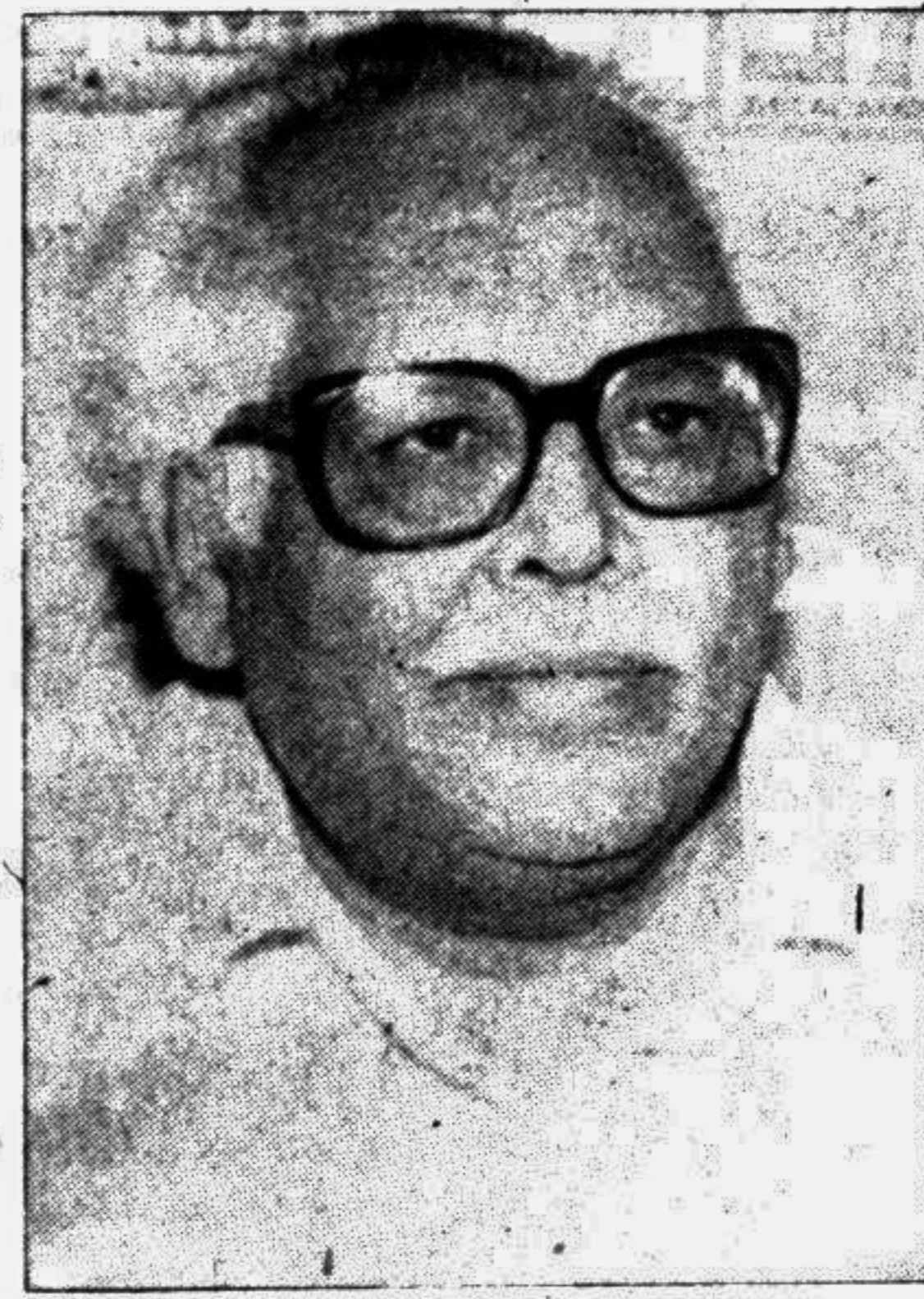
Hartal, procession, protest rally and then those teargas shells, lathicharge and finally bullets: all these, like pieces of a puzzle, when put together complete the picture of an agitation, without doubt. Though not any of these recent ones, this took place 43 years ago on February 21.

Reminiscing that very day M R Akhter Mukul, one of the architects of that historical movement brings history to life once again — not only for the sake of reviving memories but also to let us, the next generation, know what exactly happened that day.

The curiosity generally is: why such a protest for language of all things and then again why on this particular date, what is the reason? We all know that an independent country should have a constitution of its own and in its own language too. When Pakistan decided to write the constitution of East and West in Urdu only then the protest began, Mukul says as he goes through the pages of history that he wrote himself.

The language movement took place twice. Once in 1948 when Jinnah announced in the then Race Course grounds that Urdu will be the official language of East and West Pakistan and finally again in 1952. After the death of Jinnah in '48 then prime minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan agreed to circulate the 'Draft of Basic Principle of Constitution', but after his death in '51, Chief Minister of East Bengal Khawja Nazimuddin, who became the Prime Minister of Pakistan in '51, shouldered the unfinished task.

He addressed a public meeting in January 26, 1952 at Paltan Maidan emphasizing that Urdu will be the language



of Pakistan, only then hell broke loose. Mukul explains his feelings still as strong as ever. "We couldn't let such a thing happen at any cost, any friends and myself we were then 'university students. We protested the action next very day, January 27. We called a meeting on January 30. This was presided over by Moulana Bhasani, founder of Awami Muslim League," he continues.

It was decided at this meeting that February 21 would be the day of protest. This very day was chosen because the then East Bengal Legislative Assembly budget session would begin from that date. It was thought that their demands would be placed before the MLA's then. "In those days it was a very difficult task to organise hartals, so from February 1 to 20, a full swing preparations for the hartal and other programmes were taking place. But on the eve of 21st, i.e. on the evening of February 20, the government of East Bengal declared section '144,' he explains intently as if he was back on the roads again."

"Defying section 144 was difficult as well as dangerous. We were waiting anxiously for the news or decision from the meeting in session on 34, Nawabpur Road, at Awami office. The meeting which was presided over by Abul Hashem was basically signified by ballot. Eleven

were against breaking section 144, four were for the move and one was neutral. After that meeting we the students (Fazlul Haq, Habibur Rahman Shelly, Zillur Rahman, Comrade Sultan, S.A Bari, A.T Anwarul Huq Khan, Quamrudin, Dr. Manzoor Hussain, Abdul Momen, M.R Akhter Mukul, Anwar Hossain) decided to break section 144 by bringing out a procession," he recalls.

The city became normal after it was decided that the hartal would be withdrawn, the only disturbed area was the university as he remembers. "From 10 am to 1 pm we brought out small processions of 10 people each as decided by Abdus Samad Azad and all were arrested simultaneously even the women protesters. They picked them up by bus and took them as far as Bhawal jungle to walk to city alone. Most of them were taken to jails as well.

No firing was done during the morning hours, only when the students broke the single brick wall between the Medical College and then Arts building (the emergency section of

DMCH) now that the rain of bullets came in. "We took this way to avoid the streets and moreover we wanted to shift the attention towards the Assembly Building then, which was, where the old Jagannath Hall is now. Police wanted to clear the roads and we wanted to block it. It was around 3:10 pm that the clash began. Our weapons were bricks from the nearby under construction site for nurses quarters, and few tear gas shells that we could return to the police. Finally police opened fire. Three died on the spot and 91 were injured.

Curfew was declared in the evening. Police backed up by army picked up the bodies from the morgue. Many of us, the students, came to the protest purely because of patriotic emotions but later were not into politics at all. "Mukul explains the days events which finally materialized their dream."

Today when he looks back to those hours, that struggle, that passion he strongly feels that the spirit of his beloved country is merely going through a transitional period. There is still time, emotional attachment, systematic endeavour to bring back that verve and build the nation. "I personally feel that the works of educated middle class is not reaching the general mass; literature, drama, all cultural activities are confined to Bally Road, Nilkhet such posh areas. We should come forward to take the language and culture to the real people — nothing is lost as yet," he believes strongly.

The reason for his belief is that he feels that Bengalees as a nation is very flexible and tolerant. "They accept things as they come and are not rigid. One who celebrates valentine's day, goes to Shaheed Minar on February 21, prays in the mosque on Fridays, exchanges cards on new years. The younger generation are more open and agreeable. I still have hope as long as they remain so. This transitional period is only a dot if compared to good things ahead."



Florists making wreaths with the advent of the 'Amar Ekushey' in the city yesterday. — Star photo

'Re-open translation wing of Bangla Academy'

Prof Hayat Mamood at a discussion called for strengthening the translation work in the country to enlarge the horizon of Bengali literature, reports BSS.

He also urged the Bangla Academy authorities to re-launch its translation department which would be immensely helpful in this regard.

This was observed yesterday at a discussion on 'the scope of creativity in translation', organised by the Bangla Academy at its premises as part of its month-long Ekushey programme.

Presiding over the function, Prof Kabir Chowdhury said, literary translation is a continuous process all over the world which enables readers to go through alien literatures in their own languages.

Prof Sayed Manzoorul Islam read out the key note paper while Prof Hayat Mamood and Prof Tapanjyoti Barua took part in the discussion.

Stressing the need for translation, Prof Chowdhury said, people belonging to one language would not be able to know peoples of other languages without translation.

Prof Manzoorul Islam in his paper said, a translator should be creative as well as capable to uphold the original mood of the literature he wanted to translate.

"It is an art which presents creativity of a translator as well as message of the original literature," he said adding, a translator must have good command over both the lan-

guages. Prof Tapanjyoti Barua in his speech said, if the translator dominates his own style the originality of the work may be distorted.

Price spiral : LDF blames govt

By Staff Correspondent

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday strongly criticised the failure of the government in checking the price spiral of essentials and demanded action against the profiteers responsible for it.

Addressing a rally at the Nur Hossain Square, leaders of the left leaning parties also announced programmes of holding a rally and hunger procession in the city on February 25, and demonstration in front of Prime Minister's Secretariat and gherao of DC offices in all districts on March 11.

Dhaka Book Fair prizes

By Staff Correspondent

Agami Prakashani, Shirin Publications and Biswa Sahitya Kendra have won the first, second and third prizes respectively for publishing highest number of books on the occasion of the Dhaka Book Fair.

The stall of the BRAC publications has been adjudged the best stall of the fair which was held from January 1 to 15 this year.

Fourth Short Film Festival

Today's films

11 am: Pannwitz (Germany) by Didi Danquart; Halki Barish (India) by Sandip Ray; Dinat (BD) by Shaheen Dil. Venue: Public Library auditorium. 11:30 am: Films of Satyajit Ray — Sanki; Abhinetri; Premee. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium. 1 pm: In search of Indian Theatre (India) by Abhijit Chatterjee; Rhythms (UK & BD) by Ruhul Amin; Lost Hope, Lost Dreams (Canada) by Vince Colyer.

Venue: Public Library auditorium. 3 pm: Films Satyajit Ray — The Studio; Class Friend; Smritibhram. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium. Screening of anti-communal films — I Live in Behrampada (India) by Madhusree Dutta; Tale of a Lane (BD) by Tanvir Mokammel. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. 3:30 pm: Same Player Shoots Again (Germany) by Wim Wenders; Phoolan Devi (Germany) by Marjan Quinte. Venue: Public Library auditorium. 6:30 pm: Films of Satyajit Ray — Abhinetri; Smritibhram; Premee.

Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium. Screening of anti-communal films — Eclipse (BD) by Shamim Akhter, Shahin Akhter & Makbul Chowdhury; In the Name of God (India) by Anand Patwardhan. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Four Seasons (Armenia) by Altavz Pellersjan; The Sailboat on the Hillboats (Turkey); Land of the Sanddunes (India) by Goutam Ghosh. Venue: Public Library auditorium.

Obituary

Mohammad Yahia, vice-chairman of Homna Thana BNP of Comilla district, eminent social worker and headmaster of Kalsipur High School, died of cancer in the city Saturday night. He was 55, reports BSS.

Weather

Shower, gusty wind likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at few places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khajna divisions during the next 12 hours till 6:00 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met Office said night temperature, may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius throughout the country during the period.

Country's highest temperature was recorded 29 degree Celsius at Cox's Bazar and Teknaf and the lowest 12 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets today at 5:57 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:28 am.

বাংলাদেশ ডায়ালগিক সমিতি
ইব্রাহিম মেমোরিয়াল ডায়ালগিক সেন্টার
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দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

অত্র হাসপাতালে অর্ধপত্রিক বিশেষায়িত সার্জিক্যাল মাসনামাল জন্মের জন্য প্রকৃত বাবসারী ও চিকিৎসার সময় নিকট হইতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইবে। দরপত্র সিডিউল এই সমিতির নগর হিসাব শাখা (কামরা নং - ২০৮) হইতে সকাল ৮টা থেকে ১২ পর্যন্ত নগর ৭৪/- (পাঁচতারা) টাকা (অফিসঘন্টায়) প্রদান করিয়া অগামী ২০-০২-৯৫ইং তারিখ হইতে ২৫-০২-৯৫ইং পর্যন্ত সংগ্রহ করা যাইবে। এ তারিখের পর কোন সিডিউল কিংবা করা হইবে না।

দরপত্র আগামী ২৭-০২-৯৫ইং তারিখে বেলা ১২-০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে সমিতির কামরা নং - ২০৮ এর সম্মুখে বন্ধিত টেকার বাসে ফেলিতে হইবে এবং এ দিনই ১২-৩০ মিনিট এর সময় উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের (যদি কেহ থাকেন) সামনে বেলা হইবে।

কোন কামরা না দর্শাইয়া যে কোন দরপত্র বাউল বা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

ডি-২০২ **মহাপরিচালক**

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