

Dhaka Day by Day

A Face in the Crowd

by Rashida Ahmad

Every day, in every way, Dhaka is seething with a swarming horde of humanity. Walking, riding, driving through the streets, thousands of faces, bodies, legs, arms, torsos surround you. At every instant, every step forward, the multitude shifts and changes its composition, forever being replaced by a new flock of faces, another assortment of bodies and individuals. Yet among this great mutating mass, a single nameless, anonymous face once emerged, and still haunts from time to time.

One day on my way to work, he was, quite simply, there, at the end of the street where my office is, sitting beside the rubbish heap.

Why I noticed him, that day, on a routine rickshaw-ride, amongst the throng, amid the heaving morning traffic of people and vehicles, who can say? Perhaps it was the fact that usually no one was to be found sitting at that spot, at that time of the morning. Quite often small children would be seen scavenging through the garbage. But he wasn't scavenging. He was just sitting. In the morning sun, the rays of light just reaching him through the tree's spreading branches above, his stillness and composed manner was accentuated amid the hurry of human activity all around him.

He was a total pauper, a street person, of indeterminate age. A vagabond, who might have been a child, or perhaps as old as thirty. This quiet figure, his thoughtful inactivity, immediately caught my attention, and I craned my neck to watch as the rickshaw rode past.

Thereafter, I observed him regularly, not every day, but every other day or so, sitting in the same spot, just sitting paying no heed to the rush and hubbub around him. I started unashamedly every time, scrutinising, examining, as if he were a specimen under a microscope. What fired my curiosity to such an extent? I cannot say.

He never seemed to notice my intent observations, for which I was glad. He never seemed to notice anything of the daily hustle of human activity. What comprised his private world, I wondered, that it appeared to be so completely self-sufficient that it needed to pay only a fleeting regard to the outside world?

And what was he doing, why he here, in this mundane place, at this particularly plain inter-

section of streets, like a thousand other cross-sections of the city? Why did he choose to sit here, morning after morning, contemplating who knows what?

It bothered me, unnerved me, that instead of sitting on a peaceful mountain-top, as I naively deemed more apt, he chose this spot to reflect, perhaps as a trail among the mindless mass of scurrying people to which I, myself, belonged.

Thereafter, I would stare even harder, as a test of his indifference, wanting to, but at the same time afraid to, catch his eye. I had no wish to be just a part of the crowd, as far as he was concerned, I wanted to be noticed, for my singularity, my individuality and autonomy, my separateness from the crowd. I challenged his attention.

But he never took the bait, he was unreachable, impervious. His aloofness was complete. Then, one day, my rickshaw became stuck in a jam, a bottleneck of traffic, at the junction where he sat, and we came to a standstill right beside him. My eyes fixed on him in a daring, anxious, steady stare. And at last he raised his head, looked up and met my eyes with a direct and penetrating gaze.

Beneath the wild, tortured tangle of hair, among the dirty, smudged unsmiling features, his eyes were lucid and pure, flawless and clean. I tried, unwavering, to understand, to see. There was something, I felt, if only I could perceive. What would I find behind that look what, would I figure, of his world?

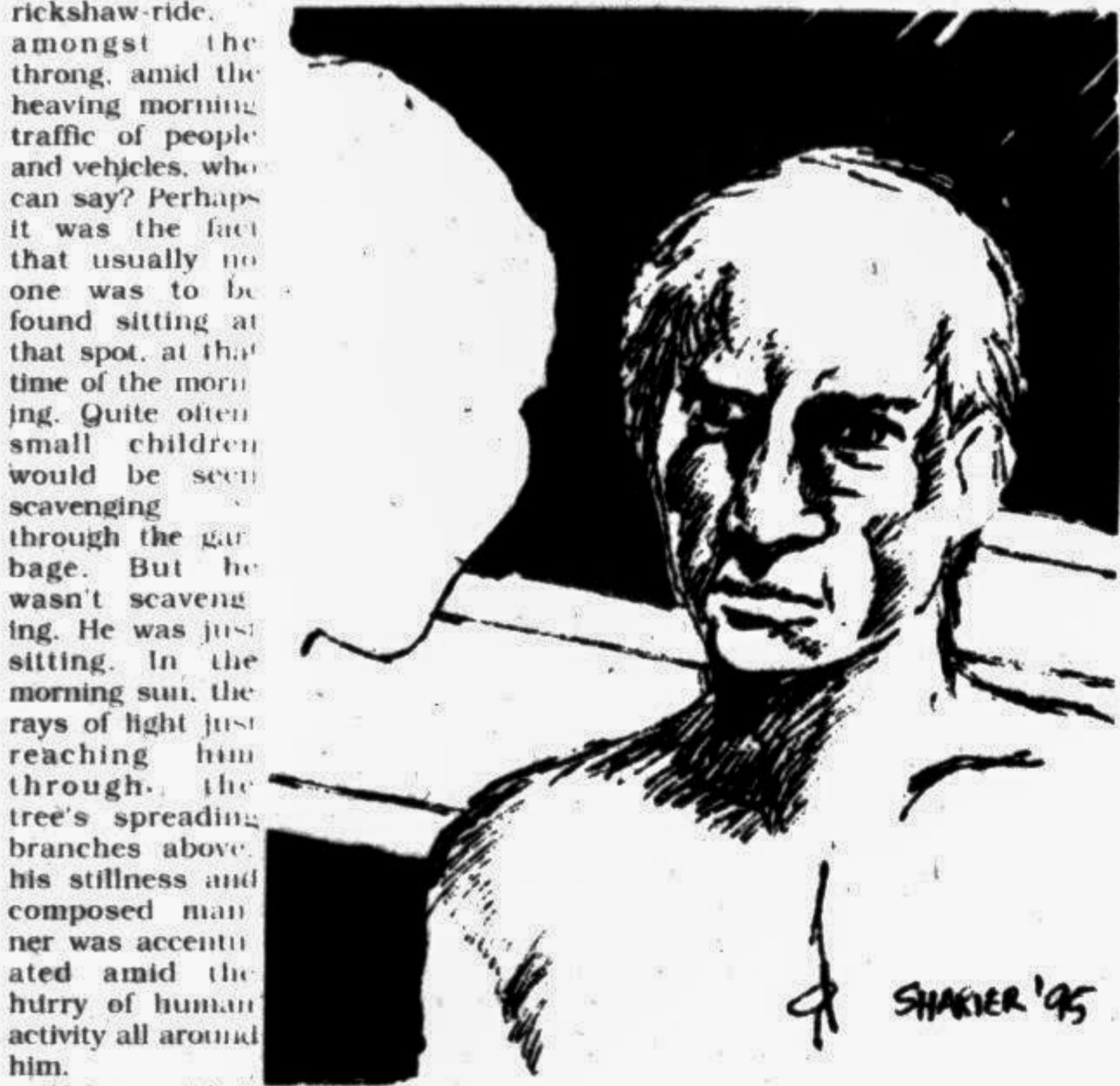
His clear, transparent gaze held mine for what can't have been more than a few moments. But it was too long for me. I became suddenly ashamed, I flinched, involuntarily, and looked away. He knew what was in my mind, my arrogance and pathetic need. I felt his undisturbed, calm inspection of me continue as the rickshaw finally moved off.

Sometime after that, he disappeared. I don't know exactly when, I avoided him, on subsequent encounters, staring directly ahead with an apprehensive uneasiness. And then one day he was gone, and the day after, and the day after that, I never saw him again. But, his memory haunts the spot, under the tree, beside the rubbish tip. I remember him often.

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central library at about 1:00 pm.

Cultural activists, young poets and journalists attended the discussion and paid a glowing tribute to the late poet.

Shakti Chattopadhyay died following a massive heart attack on March 23 at Biswa Bharati in Calcutta.

Discussion on poet Shakti

A discussion meeting on late Shakti Chattopadhyay, a leading Indian poet of Bengali literature, was held at Dhaka University yesterday, reports UNB.

Muktamon, a university-based cultural organisation, arranged the function at 'Hakim Chatter', near the university

Dutch envoy meets Majid

The Ambassador of Netherlands to Bangladesh Robert A. Vornis called on Agriculture and Water Resources Minister M Majid-ul Haq at his Secretariate office yesterday, reports UNB.



Minister for Commerce and Information M Shamsul Islam presiding over a consultative meeting of the Ministry of Commerce on the Biennial Import Policy 1995-97 at a hotel in the city yesterday. Story on Page 1 — PID photo

Nat'l Science Week ends

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday called for making the innovative activities as a part of national culture for ensuring progress and development of the country. He was addressing the concluding ceremony of National Science and Technology Week at Science and Technology Museum premises in the city, reports BSS.

State Minister for Science and Technology Prof M A Mannan attended the function as the special guest while Secretary of Science and Technology Dr Mahjuddin Khan Alamgir was in the chair.

Director of the museum Dr A M Azizur Rahman Khan and young scientists Tauhidur Rahman Boby from Dhaka and Tania Mannan from Pirozpur also spoke on the occasion.

The president highly appreciated the inventions of the young scientists from across the country exhibited during the week and urged the scientists and experts to make the efforts and inventions of the young scientists usable

through further developments. Some 150 young scientists with their projects came up in the final round of the science week competition in senior and junior groups.

Mohammad Rashedul Islam Rokon of Fulkuri Biggan Chakra of Bogra secured the first position in senior group. The name of his project is 'portable photo print machine with local resources.'

Mohammad Omar Faruq Azad Chowdhury of Chowdhury Science Club of Gaibandha and Ahsan Habib of Faridpur Biggan Khelaghar got the second and third position respectively from the same group. Their projects are automatic incubator and developed solar oven.

Mohammad Aminullah Bahar of Prashnik Bigganagar of Khulna, Mohammad Nur Alam of Government Technical High School of Noakhali and Tania Mannan of Greenstar Science Club of Pirozpur won the first, second and third prize respectively in junior group of the competition.



Munira Khan, president, ABC (M), Raushan Ahmed, senior vice president and Z B M Bakht, general secretary, ABC seen in the picture. M K Anwar, Minister of Shipping, addressing as chief guest.

ABC founding anniversary observed

The 17th founding anniversary of Assistance for Blind Children (ABC) was observed on Sunday at BMDC auditorium, says a press release.

M K Anwar, Minister of Shipping, was the chief guest on the occasion. Munira Khan, President, ABC chaired the function. Raushan Ahmed, senior vice-president, Z B M Bakht, general secretary, ABC, founder members, past president and the members of the general body of ABC, Nina Jaquet, Charge d'Affaires, Royal Danish Embassy in Bangladesh, the dignitaries, and a number of well-wishers were present in the function. The blind students of ABC sponsored hostels, Comilla and Gazipur presented an excellent cultural function.

The chief guest praised the outstanding services given by ABC in last 17 years to the blind children for training, education, rehabilitation and eyesight restoration programmes in Bangladesh.

Dhwanan formed

By Staff Correspondent

A new cultural organisation under the name and style of 'Dhwanan' was formed on Monday aiming to train the art of speech, rhetoric, pronunciation, recitation, dramatics in Bengali language.

A nine-member committee was constituted with Dr Sanjida Khatun and Pran Kanai Roy Chowdhury Tito as its president and general secretary. Poet Shamsur Rahman and Prof Kabir Chowdhury have been named as its advisers.

The organisation will begin a three-month appreciation course this month. Waheedul Haq, Naren Biswas, Biplob Bala and Mir Barkat will conduct the course.

Keep transportation of frozen foods outside hartal, urges FFEA

By Staff Correspondent

The Frozen Food Exporters Association (FFEA) yesterday called for keeping the transportation of frozen foods outside the purview of hartal.

In a statement, association president Aftabuzzaman said export of frozen food was playing a vital role in earning foreign currency.

He called upon the Opposition not to bring the transports relating to the sector within the purview of hartals.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

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ASIA CUP 1995 SHARJAH, U.A.E.

Wednesday	5th April	India vs Bangladesh
Thursday	6th April	Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh
Friday	7th April	Pakistan vs India
Saturday	8th April	Pakistan vs Bangladesh
Sunday	9th April	India vs Sri Lanka
Tuesday	11th April	Pakistan vs Sri Lanka
Friday	14th April	FINAL

AST Computer is one of the key sponsors of the event. AST's ground hoardings will be warmly greeting the viewers of the participating countries right across Asia through Star TV's Prime Sports channel and some local channels as well.

We wish the best of luck to the Bangladesh cricket team and wish you all happy viewing!



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What's on today . . .

- Acrobatic show:** A two-day acrobatic show will begin. Venue: Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Time: 5:00 pm.
- Embroidery show:** A ten-day embroidery show will begin. Venue: Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Time: 5:00 pm.
- Seminar on electricity:** Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) organised seminar on "Prospects of Electricity Generation from Wind Energy in Bangladesh" will be held. Venue: Seminar room of the IEB. Time: 5:00 pm.
- Indian short film session:** Five short films by Kumar Shahani, Sanat Dashgupta and Sandip Ray to be screened. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium, House # 25, Road # 2, Dhanmondi. Time: 6:00 pm.
- Rotary Club of Dhaka Mid-Town:** The 857th regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.
- Rotary Club of Dhaka Buriganga:** The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.
- National Jatra Festival:** Jatra 'Neechutalar Marush' will be staged by the New Pratima Opera Group from Shibhalaya, Manikganj. Venue: Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Time: 7:00 pm.
- Rotary Club of Dhaka South:** Regular weekly meeting and monthly Board of Directors meeting will be held. Venue: Hotel Purbani International. Time: 5:30 pm.

Weather

Thundershower likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna division during the next 12 hours till 6:00 pm today, reports UNB.

Sun sets today at 6:16 pm and rises tomorrow (Thursday) at 5:46 am.

Yesterday's maximum and minimum temperature (in degree Celsius) and humidity (in percentage) were recorded in some major cities and towns as follows:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	37.5	22.2	26	29
Chittagong	31.2	23.6	55	53
Cox's Bazar	33.5	25.6	44	73
Sylhet	34.0	19.8	48	45
Khulna	35.6	21.0	62	52
Rajshahi	36.5	18.5	47	28
Jessore	35.6	19.5	-	-

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- high standard of management service including maintenance
- a serene and clean environment

Work on extension of the present structure by way of building of additional floors is due to commence by May 1995 and the first three floors (each having an area of 6, 300 sqft) will be ready for leasing / occupation by October 1995.

Commercial and other organisations interested in leasing space (minimum 1500 sqft) are requested to contact Mr. Anisur Rahman at Dhaka phones 835997, 835998 for further information.

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