

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Books at a Bargain Price

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed



They say a person is willing to pay any price to get his hands on the things he desires most. Very true perhaps. But then, what happens to the voracious reader who surrenders to temptation and against his better judgement and buys every book that takes his fancy? Simple, he goes broke. Solution: buy books, but at a discount price — go to Nilkhet market.

Nilkhet Market? the skeptics ask? Yes, it's the busy photocopy arcade which also boasts numerous shops selling SSC, TOEFL, medicine and God knows what guides else! But once you cross the congested tin shed text-book shops and go inside the market, you will come in contact with a wide range of novels, magazines and periodicals. Nilkhet lures many a city dweller with its inexhaustible supply of reading materials. The main attraction is of course the bargain price charged for the second-hand books, sold to them usually by foreigners or locals leaving the country. From 'Mad' to Shakespeare, one can get anything and everything out there. You will only have to do a little searching as there is no certainty that you will find a particular book all the time. Bookworms don't really have to rush to 'Bookworm'. Not unless they want to spend a good amount of bucks or have a penchant for new and shiny covers. Classics, thrillers, war recollections, romance, biographies, travelogues, periodicals, glosses — you name it, they have it. Scan the titles of the books placed carelessly on the shelves, if you are lucky, you'll find what you're looking for. Whereas in any other city book store, such as at New Market, you have to pay a few hundred taka for one all-time-best-seller (the cheaper Indian Rupa paper backs are not always available). You can easily purchase four or five books with the same amount of money from Nilkhet.

For the Dhakaite who has never set foot in that book bazaar, here are some ground rules. Number One: Unlike regular book stores there is an unwritten law against browsing. To the salesman, one 'must' come to them with the firm intention of buying. So, the moment you enter, they shower you with persistent queries: 'ki khuchchen?' (what are you looking for?) 'koy ta niben (how many will you take?) and so on. If you simply glance at one 'Reader's Digest' pile, men from all the nearby shops will bring you there.

No. 2: Don't depend on the shopkeeper for information regarding his stock. Take his confident negative reply as a possible yes. As more often than not you're likely to be shown the wrong books. As it happened, a seller kept displaying Danielle Steele, one after another, insisting that they were better than the Dominique Lapiere the customer wanted. Oh, they are familiar with some popular writers names, undoubtedly the readers favourites i.e. Sidney Sheldon, Agatha Christie, Jeffrey Archer, Harold Robbins, not to mention the silly Mills and Boon books.

No. 3: Books are regularly exchanged. Check out your personal collection. Do you have anything you can do without? Anything that is in

moderate condition? Then why not trade it for something better.

No. 4: Books are frequently rented out with the promise of returning half the money, provided you return them within a week or so. This is an inexpensive way of trying out new authors.

No. 5: Books are valued by their thickness. The 'fatter' is the book the higher the price. This seems to be the sellers' policy. December '94's 'Reader's Digest', 'Asia Week', 'News Week', 'The Economist' Range between Tk 10-20 while the fashion magazines like 'Vogue', 'Glamour', 'cosmopolitan' or any racy (but lengthy) romance novel cost three times more. Exultant People have returned home with great masterpieces like — Alex Haley's sensational 'Roots', Harper Lee's moving 'To kill a Mockingbird' Kipling's unequalled comprehensive volume 'Wilkie Collin's enigmatic 'A Women in white' and many more at throw-away prices.

No. 6: Hagging is allowed, but the shopkeepers are seldom cooperative. In a serendipitous moment when you discover 'Not a penny more, not a penny less' peeping out from a dusty corner, the salesman refuses to budge. He asks Tk 50 and not a penny more, not a penny less, smug in the knowledge that you will give in anyway. The only time they show eagerness is when your fingers touch any epic or saga, something like, James Clavell's 'Taipan' trilogy or perhaps E M Forster's biography.

No. 7: The regular visitors say, 'you never know what can't be found there, till you have been there.' With reading matters on horticulture, hunting, astrology, theology, European cuisine, trekking, croquet etc, the market indeed caters to the diverse interests of people. A young Dhakaite happily announced the interesting books he found there. The subject 'the benefits of Shiatsu', 'Scuba-driving' and the study of psycho analysis are certainly quite a combination, if not a little eccentric!

No. 8: The assortment of books also intend to make you more cosmopolitan and this is not only in reference to the travel brochures of exciting places. The stuff available there sometimes transcends language barriers. French, German (not only the Asterix and Tintins) and even Japanese books, come in aid to the foreign language learner who otherwise can hardly find any practice material at the local stores.

No. 9: Last but not the least, remember that it's not the place for current best-sellers. So, if you are on the lookout for Vikram Shetty's 'A suitable Boy' or any of John Grisham's much acclaimed works, you will be wasting your time in the market in question. On the other hand if you are patient you can wait a few months for the new books to make their appearance there. With life getting expensive day by day, it certainly is wonderful to know there is an alternative for the average city dweller and the students with limited budget to indulge in their reading habit.



Minister for Forest and Environment Akbar Hossain addressing the inaugural session of a training workshop on acting and modelling organised by Jhalak at the National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

### What's on today...

**Lions Club International:** The three-day annual conference of International Lions Association District-315A will begin. Chief guest: Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 11:00 am.

**ALRD:** The Association for Land Reform and Development has organised a seminar on Rights of Minorities on Land. Phillip Gain will present the key-note paper. Venue: Women's Voluntary Association conference room. Time: 9:15 am.

**Zahir Raihan Film Society:** As part of the society's anniversary programme, 'My Life as a Dog' (Sweden) and 'Raise the Red Lantern' (China) will be screened. Venue: German Cultural Centre. Time: 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm respectively.

**Rotary Club of Dhaka Buriganga:** The weekly meeting will be held. Dr Deba Priya Bhattachariya will speak on 'Globalisation of Economy.' Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Rotary Club of Dhaka North West:** The regular weekly meeting, followed by a board meeting of the incoming board (1995-96), will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

### What's on tomorrow...

**Zahir Raihan Film Society:** On the occasion of the society's 9th anniversary, the following films will be screened: 'Dreams' (Japan). Time: 4:30 pm. 'Little Buddha' (Italy). Time: 6:45 pm. Venue: German Cultural Centre auditorium.

**Discussion on Tagore, Nazrul:** The Bangabandhu Parishad, Lalbagh Unit, has organised a discussion session, to be followed by a cultural function, to mark the birth anniversaries of Rabindranath and Nazrul. Venue: Azampur Community Centre. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Launching Ceremony:** The Urban MCH-FP Initiative, a partnership of the ICDDR,B and Concerned Women for Family Planning will be formally launched. Chief guest: LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder. Venue: Nagar Bhaban. Time: 10 am.

### 12-day photo show begins May 19

A 12-day photo-exhibition of unique and exclusive photos from around the world, and some selected photos from Mufti Munir. Mufti is a photo-journalist working for AFP Dhaka and Daily Sangbad. He has been covering events ranging from politics to diplomacy for more than a decade. The exhibition will remain open from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm everyday (except Saturday), said a press release.

### Matibhanga team calls on Biswas

A 15-member delegation of Matibhanga Thana Implementation and Development Parishad under Pirojpur district called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

Talking to them President Biswas said that a number of roads, highways and bridges have been constructed and re-constructed in different regions to facilitate easy movement and transportation.

Referring to government's efforts for socio-economic development of the country President Biswas said the government have been implementing different programmes for poverty alleviation and spread of mass education.

He also advised the people to cooperate with government in implementing these programmes.

### Hasina greets Menem

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday felicitated Carlos Menem on his re-election as the President of Argentina, reports UNB.

In a message she hoped that the existing friendship and cooperation between the two friendly countries would be further consolidated and strengthened in the years to come.

### Errata

In the news item on 'Bruno Award '94,' published in our daily May 16 on page 3, the sixth line of the third paragraph should read May 20 instead of May 29. The error is regretted.

### Congratulation To Urmee

For Your First Happy Birthday

From: Ratan Mama 105-Agasadek Road Dhaka

### 'Ban violence on TV, cinema'

By Staff Correspondent

The former defence secretary Salah Uddin Ahmad yesterday called for banning violence on television and cinema in order to uphold social values.

He was addressing a discussion on 'A Healthy Family Assures Prevention of Crime', held at the Police Headquarters in the city yesterday.

The Inspector General of Police A S M Shahjahan presided over the meeting, organised on the occasion of the International Family Day.

The Additional IGP AF Kabir and DIG Muhammad Nurul Huda also participated in the discussion.

### German books handed over to IU

The German Embassy handed over books on finance, accounting, ecology and communication sciences to the Independent University, Bangladesh recently, a German Embassy press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

The books were donated by the German Research Foundation, an organisation in the Federal Republic of Germany, which assists scientific institution worldwide by providing distinguished scientific publications, the press release said.

**GOOD NEWS!**  
FOR THE HEALTH CONSCIOUS  
**NOW AVAILABLE AT YOUR FAVOURITE GELATERIA**  
**LOW FAT FROZEN YOGURT ICE CREAM**  
**ALWAYS LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR INTEREST:**  
**DOLCE VITA GELATO**  
**BANANI & DHANMONDI**  
**Lychee Ice Cream**  
**is here again**  
**Avail it while season lasts**

**Required Urgently**  
The Bangladesh Resident Mission of the Asian Development Bank requires urgently for a short term the services of a librarian to organize, catalogue, computerize and set up its library and train staff in the maintenance of the library. The work is expected to commence from the second week of June 1995. Qualified persons with experience who are interested should contact Mrs. Choudhury, Administrative Officer, between 8 AM to 3.00 PM at Tel. No. 814380-5, 25 May 1995. D-487

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**  
The Bangladesh Resident Mission of the Asian Development Bank has a vacancy for one experienced secretary, preferably female. The candidate should preferably be a graduate with the following essential qualifications:  
— strong command over English;  
— excellent typing skills and speed;  
— knowledge of shorthand;  
— extensive experience in word processing (WordPerfect and/or Microsoft Word) and spreadsheets (Lotus and/or Excel). Knowledge of working with Windows will be an advantage;  
— experience of working at similar organisation  
Candidates with above qualifications should submit applications with bio-data, photo and contact telephone to the following address by 30 May 1995:  
**Asian Development Bank**  
(Ref: Secretary)  
BSEC Bhaban  
102 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue  
Kawran Bazar, Dhaka  
Those who have applied earlier need not apply. D-582

### WP observes Farakka Day

Workers Party yesterday stressed the need for a consensus among the governments of Bangladesh, India and Nepal to resolve the water issue of the region, reports UNB.

In a declaration in observance of the 'Farakka Day', the party also called for a national water policy for ensuring Bangladesh's due share of water from common rivers.

WP general secretary read out the declaration while unveiling a plaque erected in honour of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani at Kansat in Chapainawabganj.

Menon said the country must unite like they did during Bhasani's 'Farakka Procession of 1976 to demand a permanent solution to the water crisis in the country.

He alleged that in the last 19 years, no government had taken any pragmatic step to resolve the water crisis which has transformed the country's northern region into a desert.

Menon said Farakka was the main obstacle in the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India.

### JU convocation likely at the end of June

By JU Correspondent

The first-ever convocation of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) is now likely to be held at the end of June, official sources said.

Official preparations are going on in full-swing and all formalities are expected to be completed by early June.

Printing of the certificates for the former students are underway and the ceremonial gowns and dresses for the VIP attendants of the convocation are being made.

The JU authorities have also borrowed gowns for the students from other universities for the occasion.

Meanwhile, the Vice Chancellor (VC) of the university Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury has requested the Prime Minister to grace the convocation ceremony on behalf of the President, who is the current chancellor of the university. VC office sources said.

The authorities took the initiative in view of a memorandum and press statement by some 200 former students

of the university, in which they expressed their reluctance to accept certificates from the President.

The actual date of the convocation will be fixed in consultation with the Prime Minister's schedule for the month.

Earlier, the university authorities deferred the final date thrice due to lack of preparations.

Asked about the budget of the convocation, the sources said that the University Grants Commission (UGC) has allocated Tk ten lakh for the purpose.

### Sircar returns from KSA

Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar along with his wife returned yesterday afternoon after performing the holy Hajj, reports BSS.

During his stay at Makkah Sircar met the Saudi Minister of Endowment, according to a press release.