

Face to Face

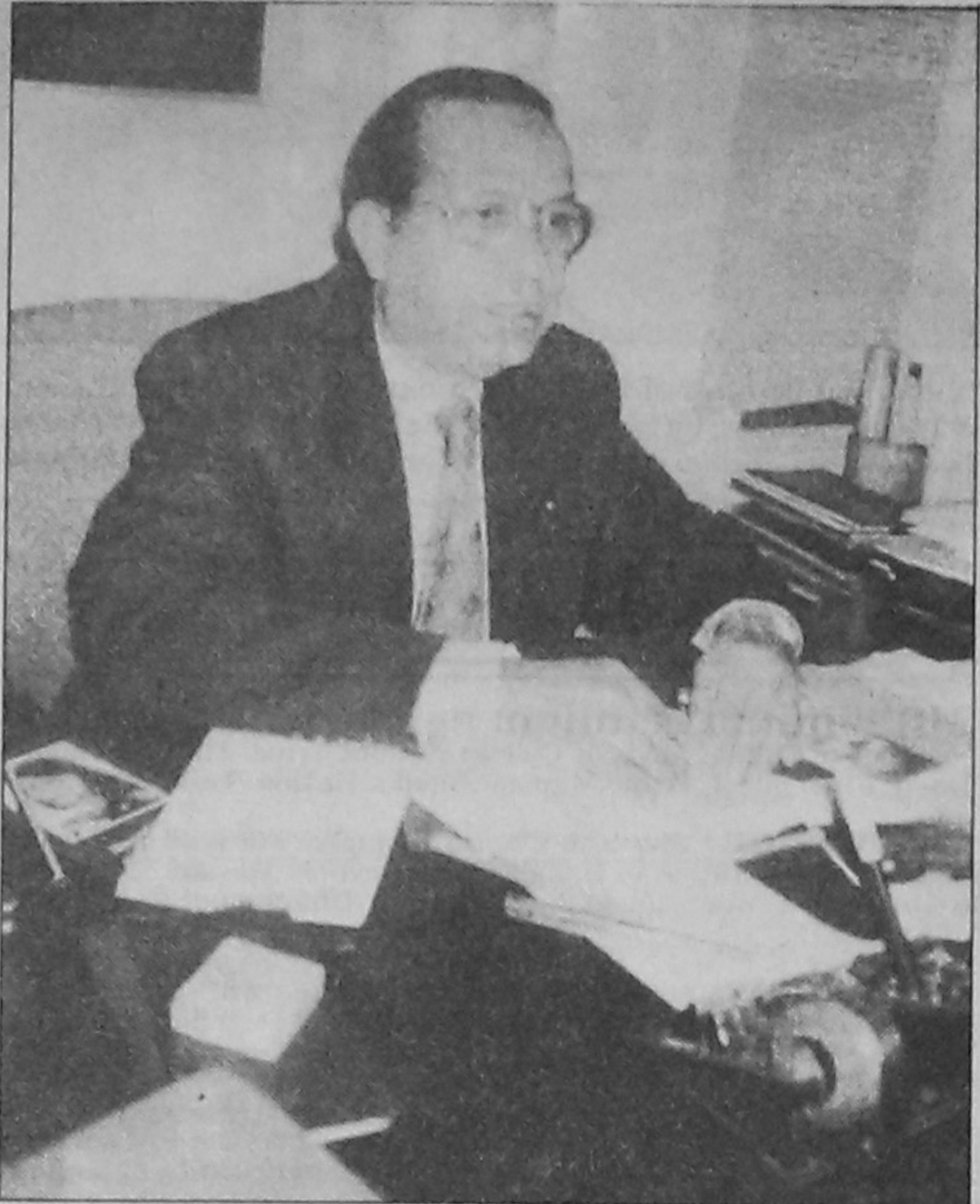
A Man of Mythical Energy

Manzoor-Ul Karim is an embodiment of the concept "Renaissance Man" with his multi-layered and multi-dimensional talents encompassing a wide area. An acclaimed sports organiser, he was president of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation from 1972 to 1982 and the Bangladesh Badminton Federation from 1983 to 1985.

He produced a wealth of children literature and poetry, writing under the penname Imran Noor. He has, to date, over twenty books to his name. An achiever in the real sense of the term, Manzoor held key government posts in his chequered career. He was the managing director of Biman in the 1980s, secretary of health and also of home affairs at a very turbulent moment in the country's history. Manzoor has literally injected fresh blood into the Scouting movement in the country through community development programme. He has been successful in involving Scout force in sanitation, child health and leprosy programmes.

Currently president of Bangladesh Scouts, Manzoor was conferred on the Bronze Wolf, the highest award in World Scouting, in 1990 by the World Scout Committee in Geneva. Earlier in 1982, he received the highest national scout award, the Silver Tiger. He was made Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee in 1982.

Always at the thick of



action and a man of deeds, Manzoor has retired from government services. Now, he is actively involved in building tourism industry in the country and devotes more time in Scouting. He is also a senior adviser to UNICEF, Bangladesh. Interviewed by Ziaul Karim.

Q: You are now president of Bangladesh Scouts and also seen the Scouts movement reaches its new picks as Scouts national commissioner. Scouting with the philosophy to building individuals in the society it seems has failed to emerge as an active force in society. We hardly feel the presence of the scouts in community development programmes.

A: Scouting is never aimed at a well concerted movement as one expects from a political group or a party, rather it is the individual who is our target. Ours is a character-building movement. The young boys and girls who would grow up to shoulder social and national responsibilities must grow up as a good citizen in the first place is what we strive to achieve through Scouting.

Q: You want to build the society from within is that what you are trying to hint at? And then how to measure your success in your efforts?

A: Yes. That's right. But not always to indirect impact. We can also yield palpable results if we can really able to take educational institutions fully along with us. But we must ensure first that our children mature as responsible citizens.

Q: Fine, but we must not forget that an individual is also a significant component

this time of moral and spiritual decadence. The greater the number of Scouts are the better for our society which has started to rot from within.

Q: Are you thinking of Scouting as an alternative institution within the traditional academic institutions?

A: In a way, Yes.

Q: Now the question is how Scouts will interact with the society? And there are cases of huge high school drop-outs in Scouting.

A: Most of the drop-outs take place after the passing out of SSC because of economic and social reasons. There is no continuity there.

Q: Do you have any specific programme to attract more college and university students to the Scouting movement since that is the time when things go wrong for the students, either they are derailed or infected with vicious student politics?

A: Yes. Since I came to the leadership I have introduced various community development programmes.

Q: And what are those?

A: In the health sector we run a programme called 'Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases.' There is a government programme to contain Diarrhoeal diseases, but do you know who takes the programme to the community grassroots level? Do you think the field workers appointed by the government can cover all the areas, reach all the target people? The idea is if we can involve young scouting energy into awareness building programmes, particularly with 'child to parents' approach it could do wonder. So, Scouts are in this programme. The Scouts act as a core group and around them the other groups of the locality or the schools form an extended group. Similarly on the issue sensitizing people about using iodized salt. Scouts are at works in awareness creation. You won't see much Scouting activity in the cities and towns, they are

now more concentrated in villages contrary to the city-based Scouting of the past. In the past Scouting was centered in the city or district schools, but that is not the case with present day scouting. Now you will be surprised to discover that most of the Scouts are coming from remote village schools. Today the Scout force including the leaders stands at an astounding figure of 1.2 million.

Q: That is amazing, but how come their presence is hardly felt in the society.

A: Our primary goal is to make sure that the young Scouts of today becomes responsible citizens of tomorrow. Look at any big event held in national stadium, Scouts are there to maintain discipline, to help a much smoother function of the event. You have to keep in mind they are no professional group, they are only there volunteer their services to help the organisers of any event.

Q: So, there role is basically of a helping force.

A: Bangladesh Government in its nutrition programme has involved Scouts, as it has found that Scouts are the best linkage between the communities and the programme. In villages Scouts' presence is ubiquitous, if you go arsenic hit areas and people over there who told them about the do's and don'ts of arsenic you would get the answer that it is the Scouts who are educating them about the menace, plus it is our policy not to attract much of a media attraction. We want to remain as silent

builders of the society. There is another reason for remaining at a low key. It has already been recognised that Scout is a force and a very large at that. We, therefore don't want any political manipulation of this huge force. This is another reason why we prefer to be out of the doldrums of media attention. Though our presence in the cities are relatively thin, we have a Dhaka-based programme called 'Clean Dhaka, Save Dhaka.'

Q: We have not seen any appreciable change in Dhaka's filthy atmosphere.

A: You are right. What we have realised out of this programme is that it is too difficult for the Scouts only to continue with the programme with the main responsibility resting with the municipal corporation.

Q: True. But the responsibility of the Scouts, if any, is with creating awareness, with motivating people to keep their city clean and not performing the cleaning act by themselves. Don't you think you have failed there?

A: I won't say we have failed miserably. There are some areas where our good works are being replicated by others. Ganderia for instance with the leadership of the local municipal commissioner. We have to mobilise local leaders and inspire them enough to involve in our programmes. We are holding seminars and dialogues to sensitize people about our programme. It is obviously going to take time. We have not given our hope.

Q: You were also, in your

colorful career, has also been the MD of Biman and probably aware of the recent moves to off load its shares. What do you think about Biman's privatization move?

A: The idea to privatize Biman was there since its inception. It requires a lot of courage on the part of the government to initiate that and I'm glad that it is going to happen at last. And that is possibly the only way to make Biman a viable and efficient airline. We should have gone for it a lot earlier. This is a move in the right direction.

Q: Once insider of Biman do you have specific recommendation for its modernisation?

A: The key to any refurbishing attempt at an institution has to begin with the stock-taking and then to look at what is happening at the international front, then you have devise what suits best for you. If you stick with let's say with DC-10 when other airlines are running Boeing-707 then you are behind, plus passengers do have their choices. As an airlines reading the mind of the passengers is also an important key to making business. The most important thing for airline business is the maintenance facilities. With the hanger complex is on that we think has been taken care of. But it has to be seen that it is manned by skilled people. Last but not the least is the customer service, how do you behave at the counter where the tickets are sold, and inside the aircraft, how you are treated at the air port.

When I was a Teenager...

IN CONVERSATION WITH FARIDA AKHTER

By Ekram Kabir

FARIDA Akhter - writer, researcher and rights activist - dreamed to become a doctor when she was a child. "First, my intent to become a doctor developed by observing my uncle who was a very reliable doctor and a good person; everything about him inspired me to believe that doctors were good people; and then due to an unavailability of a physician, I lost my brother who died of typhoid in the village. And this tragedy was at the centre of what I wanted to be", said Akhter while talking to *The Daily Star* at her office at Shyamoli. Interestingly, when she played with her dolls, she always slipped into the role of a doc.

More than dolls, she was interested to play cricket with boys, during the mid-'60s, when Hanif Mohammad and Mushtaque Mohammad were reigning the subcontinental cricket scene. Listening to commentaries didn't satisfy her; dressed in whites she joined her brothers and their squad on the pitch. "Cricket wasn't the only game I played with the boys; I also play 'marbles' with them. But that doesn't mean I wanted to be a boy; I just felt playing those games more than getting my dolls married to each other," explained Akhter when she browsed her memory about her childhood. She feels engulfed with a wonderful feeling that they, unlike the children these days, were made to feel that they actually had a 'childhood'. "I can still recall the day when my mother ordered me not to go out because I wasn't a child any more; I knew my babyhood was over, and it was time to gradually be worldly-wise," she said.

It was time to turn at-



tenition towards books. Besides, classroom materials, Akhter and her friends were passionate readers of Bengali thrillers by Niharjan Gupta. Reading wasn't a personal pleasure to them; it was a very passionate intellectual entertainment for the entire lot, as she says. "Halfway through the novels, we all used to write down the name of the assassin, and later on after completing the book we'd confirm as to who made the right guess."

But she couldn't read much of Bengali literature in her early days owing to the fact that they were attending school in erstwhile West Pakistan. "We spoke Bengali all right, but there wasn't much scope for reading. It wasn't until 1971 I dipped in Tagore and Nazrul's writings," said Akhter. There was another specific reason for her ascension toward Bengali stalwarts' works. "I listened to the Bangabandhu's voice on March 7, 1971 on the radio; and it was an emotional avalanche for me that lighted the Bengali self in me. Since then, I am an avid reader of Bengali literature."

Akhter was growing up during a time when there was a strong sense of bon hommie and camaraderie in the society. She remembers when their family lived in Chittagong city, it was quite a large family; and every other day a guest would arrive from the village for many reasons. They tried to extend them the maximum comfort they could, as Akhter remembers to sleep on the floor on a numerous occasion, sacrificing their beds for the guest. "No one felt sour about their staying at our place as long as they required to; I once had to go to the kitchen to study the night before an exam. Still, we wouldn't mind. And after all these years, I feel this

never knew what were inside the packs.

I also take certain amount of contentment about how I, bit by bit without letting anyone know, made the flag of the new nation at the flag end of the war. I feel very good when I think that I was there at a historically important time," said Akhter.

By nature Akhter tried her best to protest against social ills. She protested against her teacher attitude towards one of her friends when she was in college. "The boys were teasing her and she was about to complain. But our teacher became very annoyed with her reaction. Protesting this, I led my female classmates out of the class and went to the principal to seek redress."

So how were the love-at-first-sight guys at that time? "There certainly were some boys who were rude and naughty who often made lovey-dovey overtures, but they were never serious. And those who really liked us would never come up to say it. The honest always maintain low profile, you know? There were both traditional and smart girls as well. But on the whole the boys had high respect even when they behaved rudely with girls," said Akhter, smilingly adding, "No one would get violent even after being refused by a girl."

Akhter was of the lot who started opening windows for women. "At that time, women reigned many creative arenas. The number of females was more than males in cultural activities when she saw herself through college and university."

But Akhter laments today's teenage girls are allowing themselves to be commodified, especially by the media, in terms of dresses, in terms of cosmetics. "There was a time, you could see them turning red when girls blushed; today they need make-ups for that. That's not a good thing to happen. I think you need to ban the beauty parlours before banning *fatwa*."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Local Govt. Engineering Department
 Office of the Executive Engineer
 LGED Bhaban, Tangail
 Memo No. LGED/EE/RDP-14(TIDP-II)/TANG/2000/1113 Date: 21.12.2000

Tender Notice

No. 05/2000-2001

Sealed tenders are hereby invited for the following schemes under Rural Development Project-14, Infrastructure, Tangail District Phase-II (TIDP-II), by the undersigned from pre-qualified contractors/firms of Tangail Infrastructure Development Project-II (TIDP-II) and also from the pre-qualified contractors/firms of all other LGED's Donor funded Rural Development Projects (Class equivalent to the requirement of column 8 of Sl. No. 7 of this Notice) for the execution during the financial year 2000-2001.

- Place of purchasing of tender documents
 - Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka.
 - Office of the Project Director, Rural Development Project-14 (TIDP-II), LGED, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla-Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
 - Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Tangail.
 - Office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, Tangail & Gazipur.
 - Office of the Upazila Engineer, LGED, Nagarpur, Tangail.
- Place of submission of tender documents
 - Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka.
 - Office of the Project Director, Rural Development Project-14 (TIDP-II), LGED, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla-Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
 - Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Tangail.
 - Office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, Tangail & Gazipur.
 - Office of the Upazila Engineer, LGED, Nagarpur, Tangail.
- Last date & time of tender purchasing
- Last date & time of tender submission
- Date & time of tender opening
- Special conditions
 - Earnest money mentioned against each group of work has to be submitted in favour of EE, LGED, Tangail, in the form of BD/CD/Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh.
 - The authorities reserve the right to accept anyone or reject all or any tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
 - Detailed specification and other terms & conditions can be seen at the undersigned's office during office hours.
 - Income tax and VAT etc. will be deducted from bills as per Government rules.
 - The tenderers have to fill up the schedule by percentage quotation on the estimated amount if the quoted rate is within the 5% below to 5% above.
 - The tenderers have to submit detailed analysis if the quoted rate is more than 5% above or below than the estimated amount and fill up the tender schedule accordingly.
 - The decision will be given by lottery if equal percentages are received from tenderers & the date of lottery will be notified duly.
 - If any forged Bank Draft/Pay Order is identified with the tender then immediately criminal case will be started against the firm/company as per Govt. rule and his contracting license will be cancelled & ultimately the firm/company will be black listed.
 - Presence of contractor or production of enlistment/pre-qualification papers will not be necessary at the time of purchasing of tender documents. Contractors can buy the tender documents from the concerned offices through any of their representative.
 - At the time of submitting tender, the tenderers have to submit the attested photocopies of renewed enlistment/pre-qualification license & work experienced certificate.
 - Tenders can be submitted to the tender receiving offices as per tender notice by registered with AD post. But in this case, tenders should reach the offices concerned before the last time of receiving tender, otherwise tender will not be acceptable.
 - A bidder will have his tender and enlistment cancelled should be found to stand in default of co-operating with or obstructing the other bidders in the process of purchase and/or submission of tender schedules as well as taking initiatives for negotiations or having proof of his involvement in the same.

Sl. No.	Contract No.	Name of works	Estimated cost (Tk.)	Earnest money (Tk.)	Price of tender documents	Time allowed (Weeks)	Min. Categ. (Class)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	LG-NS-17	Construction of 2 Nos. Box-Culvert on Nagarpur-Shahajani Road at Ch.12+930 and Ch.13+590 (Km+m) under Nagarpur Upazila, Tangail	13,08,626.00	32,716.00	750.00	8	"C"

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Hasan Kabir Khasru
 Executive Engineer
 Local Govt. Engineering Department
 Tangail