

# TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Aminul at his store

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Eighty Thousand Books a Day

I loved visiting this place when I was a schoolboy in Dhaka in the seventies. The used book market at Nilkhet, about fifty yards south of Balaka Cinema, consisted of a handful of vendors selling books and magazines along the footpath. Offering both Bangla and English books within reach of my budget, this tiny corner market exerted a strong pull on me.

Decades have passed. The market is now a giant collection of bookstores and related businesses, comprising over six hundred shops. Several markets make up the complex. The largest one, Islamia Market, sells both new and used books. Next to it, Baku Shah Market offers book-related services, including printing, photocopying, binding, making banners, etc. Two smaller markets round out the complex.

The shops closest to the footpath sell stationery and textbooks for schools and colleges. Entering the depths of the mazelike market, you see dedicated sections for medicine, law, business, arts, sciences and engineering textbooks. About twenty-five shops offer a variety of English paperbacks and magazines.

When I stopped by, it was a hot afternoon, but that did not slow the steady stream of youthful customers visiting the stores of the market, most of which are tiny (say forty or fifty square feet.)

I spoke with Md. Aminul Haque, store-owner and publisher. He sells textbooks in his store and under publishes sociology books under the Upoma Prokason brand.

I asked how long he had worked here.

"Since 1982," he replied. "First I worked as an employee, then about ten

years ago I started my own store."

Is it a good business to be in?

"Profit margins are tight. We earn five to ten taka profit on a new book, a little higher for a used book, making up for low margins by selling high volumes."

"Can you estimate how many books are sold every day in the entire market?" I asked.

He said their 320 bookstores sell about 250 books a day. That translated to roughly 80000 books sold here daily.

Which categories of books attracted the most customers?

"School and college books sell most, because all school and college students have to buy them. Once they enter university, they branch out into different subjects and get their books from all over the entire market."

A customer came looking for a textbook. That's when I noticed the ladder behind Aminul. My eyes followed an employee climbing it as Aminul instructed him to get it from the topmost shelf, twenty four feet high.

Of course he knew exactly where every book was.

One reason the market has grown are the dozens of schools, colleges and universities within easy reach of Nilkhet. Their students buy textbooks and supplies here.

"What was the most expensive book you sold?" I asked.

"I remember, in the 1980s, rare engineering textbooks cost a fortune when they went out of print. Nowadays, thanks to technology and quick printing, prices are reasonable," he replied.

Nilkhet's used book market has indeed come a long way since my adolescence!

## DRIVER'S DEATH IN BUS TORCHING 4 pro-BNP men shown arrested

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four leaders of BNP's front organisations were shown arrested yesterday in a case filed after a driver, Badar Ali Beg, was burnt alive when his bus was set alight in the capital's Khilgaon on April 21.

The defendants are Jatiyatabadi Swachhasebak Dal President Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel and General Secretary Mir Sharafat Ali Safu, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku and Jubo Dal General Secretary Saiful Islam Nirob.

Sub-Inspector of Khilgaon Police Station, Moksedur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced them before a Dhaka court and sought a 10-day remand.

Police had re-arrested them at the Kashimpur Central Jail gate on Thursday night after they were released in an arson case filed for torching a bus in front of the Prime Minister's Office during the April 29 hartal.

Metropolitan Magistrate Harun-or-Rashid also fixed June 20 for hearing the remand prayer.

# Tetanus care facilities at stake

M RAHMAN

A small broom stick pierced her hand when Ajufa Begum in her 60s was sweeping the floor of her shanty. Days rolled by as usual with Ajufa not caring for the wound.

It began on the fifth day of the incident when her body temperature soared high. On the twelfth day, she got stiff jaws, unable to utter any words.

Family members soon took her to Madaripur district sadar hospital from her home in Kalkini upazila, but doctors could not figure out what Ajufa had contacted.

Sent to Dhaka, she was diagnosed with tetanus--a bacterial disease marked by rigidity and spasms of the voluntary muscles--at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

DMCH lacks an isolated ward to treat tetanus patients. So Ajufa was sent to Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in Mohakhali where she got admitted on April 28.

The elderly woman is now almost cured and waiting to get back home.

Ajufa Begum is lucky enough to receive proper treatment in the capital city. In rural Bangladesh, 80 percent tetanus-affected people die, either due to prejudice of demonic possession or lack of treatment facilities.

Experts say many tetanus patients in the country, especially in rural

areas, die prematurely because of absence of tetanus treatment facilities at upazila and district hospitals.

The government also does not know how many people die from tetanus across the country every year, they said. Tetanus deaths are also highly underreported, they added.

National Professor Dr MR Khan has recently said tetanus deaths go underreported, as patients usually do not go to hospitals due to the prejudice of evil spirit.

Dr Mohammad Amimul Ehsan, a consultant at IDH, said tetanus patients have to be treated in isolated wards, because it is a highly contagious disease.

Any person with an open wound that bleeds is likely to get tetanus, he said.

Tetanus germs have also high resistance capacity--they can stand boiling for as long as 40-60 minutes and heat for one hour, he said.

Regarding lack of tetanus treatment facility, Dr Ehsan said Mohakhali IDH was the lone hospital in the capital which had separate wards to treat tetanus patients.

Therefore public and private hospitals usually send these patients to IDH, he added.

Dr Ehsan said 447 tetanus patients were admitted to Mohakhali IDH between March 2010 and December 2011, and of them 137 died.

Over 80 percent patients came from

rural areas, he added.

Mohakhali IDH, set up in 1972, is better equipped compared to other government infectious diseases hospitals, he said, but it has a mere 35 beds for tetanus patients.

The IDH also does not have an ICU and CCU, though tetanus patients often have cardiac arrest while undergoing treatment.

From January to late May this year, 120 tetanus patients got admitted to the hospital, while 40 of them died, Dr Ehsan said.

According to health directorate sources, at present the government is providing three tetanus vaccines to newborns--first dose at one and half months age, second one at two and a half months, and the third and final one at three and half months.

And each woman is provided with five tetanus vaccines between 14 and 49 years of age to prevent delivery-time tetanus infection.

Many experts however suggest that the government frame guidelines in providing tetanus vaccine so that every child can grow up without having the potential risk of tetanus.

According to Dr Ehsan, a person can get lifelong immunity from tetanus, if he or she receives five tetanus doses.

The government can arrange it, he said, as it already has the infrastructure which has been used to run country-wide immunisation programme.



A man repairs a fishing net in Bridge Ghat area of Firingi Bazar in Chittagong city. He is among the thousand people who are repairing nets in the area every day at a charge of Tk 220-300. Simultaneously, the nets are being produced here at a fast pace with expectations of better catch this fishing season. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Man shot by robbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of robbers stormed a contractor's house in the capital's Mohakhali early yesterday and shot him injury.

Police said some five to six robbers broke into the house of Jahangir Alam Pintu in Saat Tola Bosti area around 6:00am and looted valuables including Tk 70,000 in cash and about 5 tolas of gold jewellery at gunpoint.

Bullet-hit Pintu was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Mozammel Haque, sub-inspector at the DMCH Police Camp, told The Daily Star that Pintu received injury in lower part of his right knee.

## Rain likely in Dhaka soon

Says Met official  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and its adjacent areas are likely to experience showers in a day or two.

The southwest monsoon wind has reached the capital on June 10 but has yet to be active, said a Met official, adding: "We hope it will be active in a day or two."

The southwest monsoon, which blows from the Indian Ocean to Bangladesh from the southwest direction causing rains, lasts from early June to mid-August.

The monsoon wind has already been active in most parts of the country, including Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and some parts of Dhaka division.

Rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur today at many places over Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Khulna divisions, Met office forecasts.

City dwellers are suffering from the sweltering heat for the last several days accentuated by frequent power cuts.

The maximum temperature in Dhaka was 35.4 degrees Celsius on Thursday but it came down to 32.8 degrees Celsius yesterday due to cloudy weather.

## BGB informer killed

UNB, Jessore

An informer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) was killed allegedly by unidentified miscreants at Jhumjhumpur in Jessore town last night.

The victim was Ziauddin, son of Shahjahan Ali of Sadipur in Kushtia district.

Locals said the miscreants stabbed Zia near local BGB School around 10:00pm on his way to a local bazar from his Jhumjhumpur home, leaving him critically injured.

He was taken to Jessore General Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead.

Zia is believed to have been killed for giving information about smugglers to the law enforcers, police said.

Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Jalil said they launched an investigation to identify the killers.

## Worker electrocuted in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A day labourer was electrocuted at Satkania Upazila in Chittagong yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sadek Hossain, 25, son of Abdul Karim of the upazila's Kerani Haat area.

Sub-Inspector Abdul Salam Munshi of Satkania Police Station said Sadek was cutting the branches of a tree owned by Abdus Salam in the Kerani Haat area around 10:00am.

He was electrocuted when he fell onto utility wires after the tree branch on which he was standing snapped, he said.

Sadek was rushed to a local hospital where doctors declared him dead, he added.

An unnatural death case was filed with Satkania Police Station in this connection.

## ROBI-DAILY STAR ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS More kids take part

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Some 250 aspiring students of Teesta KR Khadem High School and Mostofihat High School in Lalmonirhat sadar upazila took part in a daylong English Language Fair yesterday.

The Daily Star and Robi jointly organised the fair to improve the proficiency of secondary school students in English.

Teesta KR Khadem High School Headmaster Abul Kashem inaugurated the programme at the school in Teesta village.

The fair began with the screening of a movie, The Lion King. Afterwards, quizzes and competitions on vocabulary, moral lessons, extempore speech and role playing and writing picture descriptions were held based on the movie.

Students also entertained the audience by reciting poems, telling jokes and singing songs.

Conveying his first-ever experience of an English language fair, a class eight student of Mostofihat High School, Roshidul Islam, said, "The fair was really interesting. It was really enjoyable, learning all the new words and phrases."

Later, prizes were distributed among the winners and an English language club was formed.

Our correspondent from Feni reports: The English language fair was also held in Chhagalnaiya Pilot High School in Feni where students of the school and of Chhagalnaiya Academy took part.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Dialogue**  
Centre for Policy Dialogue will organise a dialogue; Venue: Lakeshore Hotel; Time: 9:30am.

**Rally**  
Bangladesh Poribesh Adolon will organise a rally; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

**Discussion**  
Bangladesh Unmukto Gonotantrik Parishad will hold a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 3:30pm.

**Token hunger strike**  
Bangladesh Beshorkari Shikkhak Karmachari Parishad will observe a token hunger strike; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: from 10:00am.

**Human chain**  
Muktijoddhar Santan O Projanma Oikyanmancha will form a human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

**Convention**  
WaterAid will organise a convention; Venue: Ruposhi Bangla Hotel; Time: 4:15pm.

**Human chain**  
Association for Law Research & Human Rights will form a human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

**Discussion**  
Sangbidhanik Adhikar Forum will organise a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

**Human chain**  
Griha Sramik Odhikar Protistha Network will form a human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

**Views exchange meeting**  
Dhaka Wasa will organise a views exchange meeting; Venue: Institute of Public Health, Mohakhali; Time: 10:30am.

**Human chain**

**WEATHER TODAY**

**Thundershowers likely**

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Barisal divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions.

Mild heat wave is sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Rajshahi and Pabna and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:48 pm, rises tomorrow at 5:11 am.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.8	29.3	81	81
Chittagong	30.8	25.6	90	92
Rajshahi	37.8	29.0	84	69
Rangpur	29.8	24.6	94	89
Khulna	37.0	30.0	87	85
Barisal	34.0	29.2	77	81

**জেলা ও উপজেলা ভিত্তিক পরিবেশক আবশ্যিক**

শিশু, গর্ভবতী, বয়স্ক ও অসুস্থদের জন্য  
২৩টি ভিটামিন ও খনিজ সমৃদ্ধ পরিপূরক খাদ্য

**মিনাভিট**

বোগাযোগ : গণস্বাস্থ্য ফুডস্ লিঃ  
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